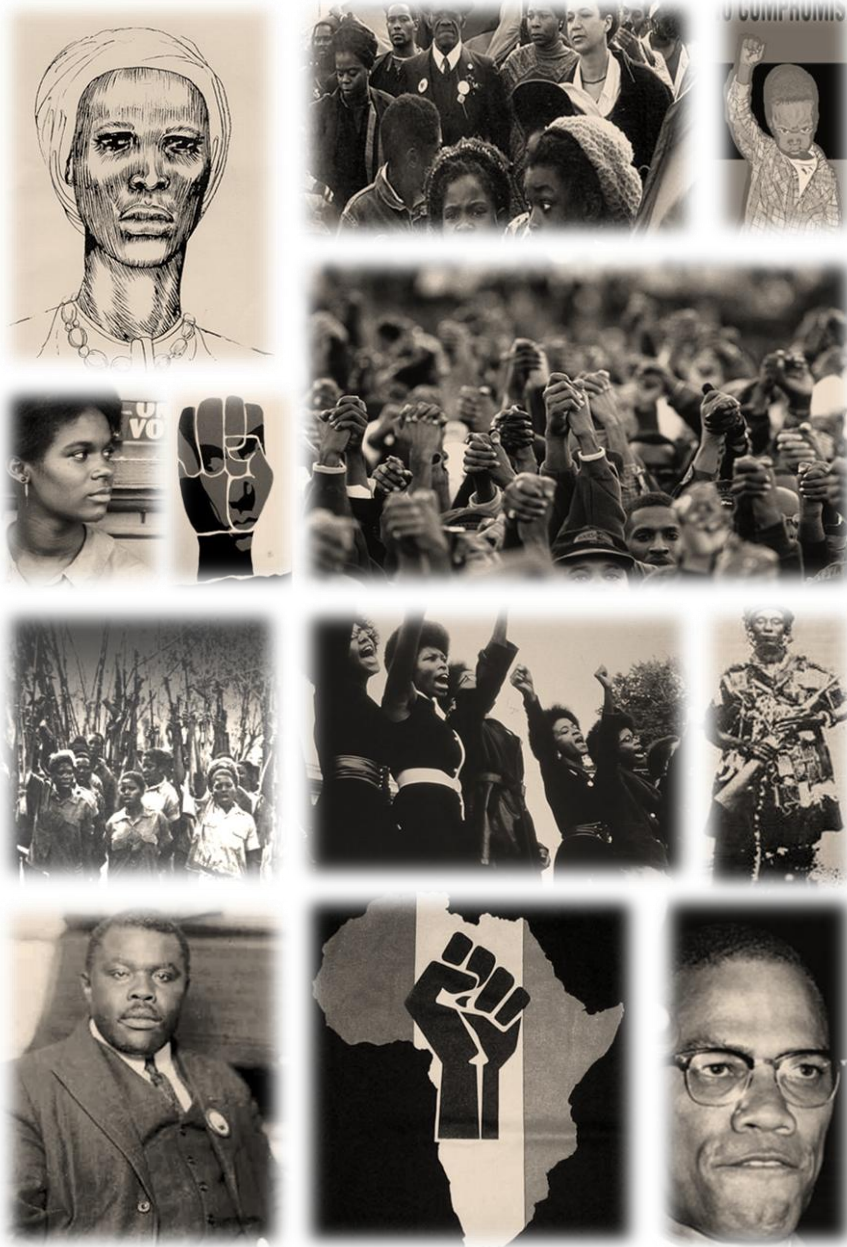# Back to Black:
Black Radicalism and the
Supplementary School Movement

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Abstract

Black radical politics are comprehensively defined and the aim is to understand how such a political ideology can be used to overcome racial inequalities in contemporary Britain. A Black radical challenge to mainstream racial theory within the academy is outlined, along with an interrogation of the principle limitation of Black radical thought, that of essentialism and cultural authenticity. To illustrate how a Black radical approach can be understood, the position was applied to inequalities in schooling. Black radicalism argues for a Black independent education. Black supplementary schools are spaces organised by concerned members of the Black community and offer extra teaching of mainstream curricula and also Black studies. These are presented as potential spaces for Black radical independent education. A Black supplementary school was selected as a case study, where a critical participatory ethnography was undertaken. The researcher spent 7 months working as a teacher in the supplementary school, collecting extensive fieldnotes. Experiences in the programme revealed strengths in the relationships, diverse curriculum and empowering nature of the environment for students. A number of challenges also arose including structure, coordination and decline in attendance. Overall, the potential for a Black radical independent education exists within Black supplementary school movement.

For Nicole and Assata

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<u>Introduction</u>

There shall be no solution to this race problem until you, yourselves, strike the blow for

liberty

Marcus Garvey[1]

Black people[2] in Britain are subject to a series of historical racial inequalities. Discrimination in the school system is well chronicled and has lead to continued lower outcomes for Black students (Steven, 2007). Unemployment in the Black community has been a persistent problem, and presently one in five Black men are unemployed (Stewart & Hopkins, 2009). Black people are five times more likely than average to be arrested, and six times more likely to stopped and searched by police (Home Office, 2002). Meanwhile, in addition to the various barriers of access to society, if you are Black in Britain you are five and half times more likely to be murdered than the average person in the population (Home Office, 2006). There are various ways to view these inequalities. One approach could be to see them as unconnected, almost random occurrences that say little about the nature of society. After all, it is by choice that they have been selected and presented in this fashion, an alternative could have been to display them as an aggregate of a range of inequalities based on gender, faith and class. It is by choice that the focus was on a series of well defined inequalities faced by Black people in Britain. Taking a position that there is a Black community that suffers from racial disadvantage has typically been approached in two ways: the liberal and the radical.

Black liberals view the collection of disadvantages as a problem of the system of liberal society not allowing fair access to the Black population. The most famous Black liberal movement was the struggle for Civil Rights in the United States, where Black people

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[1] In Asante (2002: pg.136)
[2] Black refers to people of African ancestry, aka Negroes

fought for access and representation in the mainstream of society (King, 1969). In Britain there have been similar calls for access, for example a focus on recruiting Black police officers (Sutton et al, 2007). The message from such strategies is that the system is changed the more representative it is, and therefore by increasing the number of Black police officers there should be a decrease in the disproportionality of arrests and unwarranted stops. For the Black liberal then, the solution lies in gaining better access to mainstream society.

A Black radical approach in many ways takes the opposite view and argues that far from being the solution, the mainstream is in fact the problem as it works to oppress the Black population. Examples such as Black Power (Carmichael, 1971), Pan-Africanism (Nkrumah, 1998/1963) and Rastafarianism (Campbell, 1997) all view Western society as being structurally racist and promote the creation of independent Black organisations, institutions and nations as the only solution to overcoming racial inequality in society. From this position Black people need to come together *as Black people* in a wider Diaspora, to create our own futures (Garvey, 1967/1923).

Black liberal and radical positions are on the face of it diametrically opposed, as they view the mainstream in opposite ways: one as the salvation, the other as "Babylon". However, in terms of improving the conditions of Black people in the West, the two do not necessarily compete and can support each other. For example, for Black people in Britain a Black radical will aim to create independent organisations and institutions, however, this must be done within the confines of living in the West. Black people having access to and gaining success in the mainstream should bring benefits in terms of being able to create independent institutions and support them. Black liberal campaigns are also supported by more radical ones providing alternatives and broadening the debate. Martin Luther King and Malcolm X are two of the most well known examples of the Black liberal and radical

traditions, respectively, but Malcolm saw their work as complimentary. For example, when speaking of Martin Luther King he explained,

> at one time the Whites in the United States called him a racialist, and extremist, and a Communist. Then the Black Muslims came along and the Whites thanked the Lord for Martin Luther King (DeCaro, 1996: pg.253)

Further to this Coretta Scott King recounted a conversation with Malcolm in which he explained that he did not visit the same area (Selma) to compete with her husband, but to support him. As she recounts Malcolm said,

> I want Dr. King to know that I didn't come to Selma to make his job difficult. I really did come thinking I could make it easier. If the White people realize what the alternative is, perhaps they will be more willing to hear Dr. King (Boyd, 2004: pg. 192)

So Malcolm is putting forward the proposition that Black radicalism makes the gains for Black liberals more achievable by providing a less palatable alternative for the mainstream. For Malcolm, Whites are more likely to listen to King with the threat of radical action on the horizon. The combinations and interplay of Black liberal and radical positions make the two essential in improving conditions for Black people in society, using approaches both in and outside of the system.

In recent decades, however, the Black radical position has been losing purchase in Black communities (Collins, 2006). The heyday of Black radicalism is seen as the seventies (Joseph, 2008), and Black radical voices are no longer heard alongside the liberal. Organisations within the Black community oriented around a radical ethos and programmes have felt a marked decline in their support (Andrews, 2007). Black radicalism has lost

purchase, and it is here argued that we need a Black radical position in order to address the problems faced by Black people in society. The aim of this research will be to address two main research questions, one relating to how to understand and present Black radicalism in contemporary society; and the second of how this Black radical position can be used to improve the conditions of the Black community in Britain.

Research Question 1.

'How can Black radicalism be understood in contemporary society?'

This research question is essential because a full and complete definition of Black radicalism has not been undertaken historically[3], and certainly not recently. There are a number of misconceptions of Black radical thought as insular, narrowly separatist and even racist (Joseph, 2008). Black radicalism is none of these and a key aim of this study is to present an understanding of the position that is vibrant, open and flexible enough to be adopted in contemporary society. In this regard it is essential from the outset to separate out Black radicalism from Black nationalism.

Radicalism, not Nationalism

The position that argues Black people need to organise collectively to create our own institutions has been commonly been referred to as Black nationalism (Carmichael, 1971; Newton, 1974; X, 1971). Black nationalism draws its name from the concept of Black 'as a country' (Joseph, 2008: pg.188), where Black people as a group constitute a nation. Black nationalism can tie easily into the politics of a Black Diaspora, for example Garvey

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[3] See the disputes between Black radicalism and cultural nationalism which are discussed in chapter 3.

consistently refers to the Black nation of Africans 'at home and abroad' (Garvey, 1967/1923: pg.138). However, Black nationalism has developed its own sensibilities that identify it as separate, though related to Black radicalism.

A primary issue is how the Black nation has often been viewed within Black nationalism in the United States as being a nation of Black Americans that needed to separate from White America, but remain in the geographic location. The Nation of Islam (NOI) is perhaps the most notorious Black nationalist organisation and their plea for independence and unity is clear and addressed solely to the Black population of America. The NOI appeal to the government for a separate portion of land where they can start the Black nation, and is evident in the call to Black Americans from Elijah Mohammed (1997/1965: pg.222),

> Come and let us unite under the crescent and do something for ourselves in the way of supporting our won own needs. Go after some of this earth for our nation of 22 million here in North America.

Central to Black radicalism is the connection to the Diaspora and though there may be similarities and lineages, narrow nationalist calls for independence fall outside of the wider Black radical movement. Black radicalism talks of Black people as a nation that transcends national boundaries, connecting back to Africa, and does not seek to separate Black people of a particular nation into a residential grouping. The NOI also embody a further objection to Black nationalism from a Black radical perspective: that of idealism.

Collins (2006) explains how Black nationalism in the US has developed into what she terms a civil religion. The NOI is her first explication of this, with ideas of Black solidarity intrinsically tied to the religiosity in their version of Islam. For the NOI the true expression of Blackness is Islam, which as Malcolm X put it is the 'Black man's religion' (DeCaro, 1996: pg.162). Collins (2006) further explains how this tradition of combining religion with

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nationalism is continued in the present day by the articulation of Afrocentricism. Afrocentricism is a quasi-religion, for Collins, in that it predicates its position on practices and spiritual beliefs, which are deemed African. Afrocentrism is embodied in the work of Ron Karenga and his creation of Kwanzaa, a celebration meant to tie Black people to our African roots (Flores-Pena & Evanchuk, 1997)[4]. Collins (2006) explains how an academic tradition of Afrocentrism has arisen from the ideas of culturally embracing Africanness, most notably in the work of Molefi Asante. The problem with both the approaches of the NOI and Afrocentrism is that 'neither project pushes for political mobilisation' (Collins, 2006.: pg.82). For the NOI, the future of a Black nation is predestined and Divine. Salvation for Black people is to be found in joining the NOI and embracing their practice of Islam (Muhammad, 1997/1965). In terms of Afrocentrism, the solution for Black people is found in embracing a cultural return to Africa (Collins, 2006; Lemelle, 1993).

Though there exists Black nationalisms that are focused on political change and connected to the Diaspora (for example, Newton, 1974; X, 1970), the term is bound up with expressions of the NOI, in particular, and also with Afrocentrism. It is the connection to the latter that causes Collins (2006) to argue that we should not view Black nationalism as a political ideology because Black people on the whole have rejected the politics. For Collins (2006: pg.96) Black nationalism should be seen as a 'system of meaning' that Black people use in understanding their ethnicity and racism. This is very problematic if we intend to use Black radicalism as a basis of political mobilisation, which brings us to the second central research question.

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[4] Fuller discussion of Kwanzaa and cultural nationalism will take place in chapter 3 and in the conclusion.

Research Question 2.

'How do we use Black radicalism to overcome racial discrimination?'

If Black radicalism is going to be used as a tool for mass political action then it must be disavowed from some of the more reactionary developments in Black alternative thought and presented as a cohesive political ideology that can be embraced by the community to move society forwards.

Black Radicalism as a political ideology

It is vital that we see define Black radicalism from the outset as a political ideology. Hall (1983) describes ideology as a mental framework, a set of ideas that filters our vision of society. Ideology has been viewed in different and competing ways throughout the history of sociology, however the idea of ideology as shaping our worldview is entrenched. As Weber (1949: pg.74) argues,

> Order is brought into this chaos only on the condition that in every case only a *part* of concrete reality is interesting and *significant* to us, because only it is related to the *cultural values* with which we approach reality (original emphasis).

It is accepted by Weber, then, that our values distort our picture of the world. Weber, follows in the idealist tradition where it is ideas that push society forward (Hall, 1983). Ideology is seen as a collection of ideas that shape the worldview of society and therefore impact what is created. For example, Weber (2002/1905) uses the religious work ethic at the centre of Protestant faith to explain the development of capitalism. For Weber, it these ideals that produce the material reality of capitalism.

Hall (1983) explains how Marx has a competing view on ideology that firstly sees ideology drawn from the material foundation of society. The Marxian notion of racism being borne of the necessity of capitalism is emblematic of this argument (Solomos & Back, 1995). Marx also saw ideology as not simply a collection of cultural ideas but as the mechanism of domination that the ruling class used to dominate the oppressed. The mental frame of ideology is the worldview that the ruling class create, and the oppressed are subject to, through the institutions of the superstructure for Marx (Hall, 1983). In this sense ideology is political in that it is used to maintain, justify and reproduce the capitalist order.

Gramsci took the pure Marxian concept of ideology and combined it with an idealist view, arguing that there is a combination of both ancient free floating ideas and those derived from the material conditions. From a Gramscian position 'the determinacy of the economic for the ideological can... be only in terms of the former setting the limits for defining the terrain' (Hall, 1983: pg.72). Importantly, Gramsci also retained the political nature of ideology, arguing that ruling class ideals become hegemonic through societal domination (Hall, 1986). However, this domination still allows for the existence and creation of counter ideologies that the oppressed can use to battle the ruling class. In fact, Marxism as well as being an intellectual enterprise can be viewed as a competing political ideology to capitalism as extolled in the *Communist Manifesto* (Marx & Engels, 2002/1888).

A Gramscian notion of ideology is important in defining Black radicalism. Black radical thought is drawn from both principles Africanism or Blackness, which are derived from culture and history, as well as ideas formed due to experiences and conditions over the last several centuries. As Nantambu (1998: pg. 564) argues,

> we see ourselves as an absolute and constantly struggling African people with an African past punctuated by European hegemonic exploitation, oppression, slavery and colonialism

The ideals and principles of Black radicalism form an ideology that directly challenges the system of Western capitalism and can be used to liberate Black people across the globe. Black radicalism is emphasised as a 'political' ideology to distinguish itself from more Weberian notions of the ideological. Black radicalism is not a collection of cultural ideas and values, but rather a political position forged through time, conflict and experience that produces an ideological viewpoint as to the place and future of Black people. It is this commitment to a politics of Blackness, drawn in the Diasporic sense, that makes Black radicalism radical. It is the absence of such a commitment that makes the seemingly radical not so.

Black supplementary schools

In order to fully explicate both how to understand Black radicalism and how it can be used in society this research study will attempt to practically apply Black radical theory to the field of education. Black independent institutions are the logical conclusion of Black radicalism and the Black supplementary school movement has a forty year tradition as a 'radical and subversive space' within the community (Mirza & Reay, 2000: pg. 523). The empirical research therefore focuses on work in one of the longest running supplementary schools in the country and has a number of subsidiary research questions,

- Does a radical construction of Blackness already exist within the Black supplementary school movement?
- How do we support supplementary schools and tie Black radicalism into their work?
- What would a Black radical independent curriculum involve? How is it different from the mainstream?
- Can supplementary schools be a vehicle for Black radicalism in the community?

Outline of the chapters

In order to address the stated research questions, Chapter One will firstly outline the history of Black radicalism and define Black radical thought as a politics that identifies racism at the core of Western society. It is therefore committed to Black independent organisations, institutions and states, as well viewing Blackness as rooted in the African Diaspora. An exposition of Black radical thought will be developed thorough a critique of the role of Whiteness in Western society and how using the concept can transform understandings of class and interests. An examination of Critical Race Theory (CRT) will also be undertaken, as the academic tradition has theoretical ties to Black radicalism. However, CRT will be critiqued as 'liberal radicalism' because though it accepts Black radical understandings of racism, it avoids the conclusions of independence and instead supports the status quo. The purpose of the first chapter is to comprehensively define and explicate the political ideology of Black radicalism.

Black racism is predicated on two foundations that directly challenge the orthodoxy of race and racism in the academy: racism being at the centre of society and race-conscious organisation around Blackness. Chapter Two will critique traditional academic understandings of race as being the view from above. It will be argued that liberal and Marxist understandings of seeing race as being racist and ignore alternative conceptions of Blackness that arose within Black communities. Blackness within Black radicalism is not defined by racism, nor ideas of superiority or biology but rather a historical and political expression that ties the African Diaspora together. It will be argued that the progressive politics of Blackness has been undermined by "political blackness", which has homogenised dark skinned people and worked to delegitimise Black radicalism. Further fallout from "political blackness" has been to reify the Black/White dualism that has lead to accusations of Blackness being restrictive and essentialist. In contrast to postmodern critiques of Blackness,

it will be argued that the concept is fluid, diverse and essential to creating a politics that can unite and mobilise the Black community.

In building a Black radicalism that can be used to combat racial inequalities in today's society it is essential to overcome one of the key difficulties in Black radicalism: that of authenticity. In Chapter Three, the basis for Black radical authenticity, in the form of the commitment to a Black radical ideology and politics, will be outlined in reference to developments in identity stemming from enslaved society. One of the major successes of Black radicalism has been to restore pride in being Black, however, there has been a turn to view authenticity away from politics and action and into the realm of cultural production. Black cultural authenticity will be examined by looking at the move towards cultural nationalism, the debate of the word Nigga and also Black middle class attacks on the Black poor. It will be argued that authenticity needs to be defined on politics and commitment to action, and Tupac Shakur's definition of a Thug Nigga will be used as an example with the potential to engage one of the most marginalised section of the Black community.

After defining Black radicalism, presenting a critique of and defence against challenges from academia, and attempting to reconcile the difficulty of authenticity, an attempt will be made in Chapter Four to apply Black radicalism to the field of education. Education has been a key battleground for the Black community (Grosvenor, 1997) in Britain and therefore represents a perfect site to examine the possibilities of using Black radicalism in contemporary society. Black independence is the logical conclusion of Black radicalism, and is defined as different to separatism, as the goal is to provide Black-led organisations and not simply to separate out Black people. With the prospects of creating Black independent schools being relatively low, the Black supplementary school movement is identified as a potential location for a Black radical independent education.

Chapter Five outlines the focus of the empirical research as being on the prospects of using Black radicalism in the Black supplementary school movement. In order to pursue such an overtly political research agenda, a Black radical sociological stance on methodology is developed. Mainstream sociology is critiqued as ideologically White, in the sense that it is committed to liberalism and therefore avoids normative questions. Ideals of value freedom, or neutrality will be argued to be ideological results of the role that academia plays in liberal society. Critical theory and action research will also be critiqued as ultimately supporting the status quo due to their ideological underpinnings. A Black radical sociology depends on the ideological foundation of Black radicalism, which insists on theory being directly connected to action and producing truly dialogic research involving the researcher and the researched. In order to conduct the present research, then, a Black radical participatory ethnography was undertaken where the researcher was actively engaged in Black supplementary education in order to study it.

Chapter Six is a comprehensive account of the research process that involved the researcher teaching in a more radical 'self-help' Black supplementary school project, the Lumumba Saturday School, for seven months. The empirical research is presented in the form of a chronological research diary, with the events tied into the theory. This presentation allows for the experiences to be viewed in their context and to demonstrate how the thought processes developed. In terms of reflexivity it is vitally important due to the overtly political nature of the piece that a full understanding of the ideas and their development is presented.

In Chapter Seven a thematic analysis of some of the key lessons that can be taken from the experiences in the supplementary school are presented, along with some of the challenges facing the Black supplementary school movement. From the experiences within the Lumumba project Black supplementary schools present the potential to develop a Black

radical independent education if there is time and resources invested in them by the community.

The final chapter concludes by outlining a distinction between Black redemption on the one hand and Black liberation on the other. Black redemption is a radical politics that seeks to embrace and empower Blackness through taking pride and sustenance from being Black. This is a necessary component of Black radicalism, but by itself it can lead down the cul-de-sac of cultural nationalism. Black liberation is the political expression of Black radicalism, embodied in calls for independent organisations and even revolution. Black liberation can be stymied if it is represented in an almost pessimistic, the system can only ever fail, approach. The positivity of Black redemption is necessary to infuse moves towards Black liberation and to not lose sight of the optimism that lies at the heart of Black radicalism. For Black radicals, the system is inherently set to work against the mass of Black people, but Black independence offers agency for the Black community to build our own futures.

Black Atlantic

Throughout this study sources and thinkers are used from a variety of nations. There is a particular prevalence for works written by Black people in the United States being used to make claims of racism and Blackness in the United Kingdom. The Black radical perspective does not recognise national borders and its analysis is based on Black people as a Diaspora. Racism is seen as a global phenomenon emanating from the West that Black people in various locales are subject to. Words, ideas and analysis have travelled throughout the Diaspora across history, with Garveyism being perhaps the best example (see Chapter One). In terms of the specific relationship of the formerly enslaved, the Black Atlantic (Gilroy, 2002; Walvin, 2000) in particular has been a hub where ideas have transferred

between Black communities. The analysis of the prospects for Black radicalism will herein focus on Britain, however, it is hoped that the ideas developed will have equal influence for Black people across the Diaspora.

Scope of the thesis

The central aim of the thesis is to provide a theoretical definition of Black radicalism that can be articulated in contemporary, twenty-first century society. The model of Black radicalism that lies at the basis of this definition is the Garveyite tradition that influenced Black communities across the Diaspora (as outlined in Chapter One). It is here argued that it is the Garveyite model, developed with African socialist principles by such leaders as Nkrumah, of Pan-African unification of the continent, that is the fullest expression of Black radical thought. Malcolm X develops the Garveyite position by fully articulating (in his later years) the basis of Black radicalism in the West, that of Black independent organisations and institutions (X, 1970). It is this tradition of Black radicalism, which is outlined, presented and attempted to be reclaimed in order to be used in contemporary Black Britain.

In developing this particular Black radical tradition, the thesis is not a comprehensive historical account of Black alternative thought and therefore does not include a number of figures who could normally expect to be included in a definition of Black radicalism. A conspicuous omission is the work of W.E.B Dubois who can be seen as a foundational thinker in the development of Pan-Africanism, and had deep connections with Pan-African leaders, in fact dying in Nkrumah's Ghana (Walden, 1974). Though the work of Dubois is important, his vision of Pan-Africanism differs from the Garveyite tradition being concerned with the development of an African elite, and has also been criticised for being predicted on this elite lobbying the West for influence (Gbadegesin, 1996). In terms of Black people in the West, Dubois articulated a Black liberal approach of access to the mainstream (Gbadegesin,

1996)[5]. Dubois, therefore stands in a complex relationship to the tradition of Black radicalism being developed. The purpose of the thesis is to develop and reclaim a particular version of Black radicalism and therefore the analysis of Dubois is saved for later work.

It is also necessary to state that Blackness and the development of Black radicalism in the West is also the focus of the thesis. Black radicalism is hallmarked by a global analysis of racism that connects the Diaspora, however the form Black radicalism takes is articulated differently in the West and on the African continent. Chapter One outlines the connections between the concepts of Blackness and Africanism, whilst simultaneously acknowledging that the divergent experiences of enslavement and colonialism, and the effects of being in the West mark out Blackness as a very particular expression, with its own authentications. There is therefore a focus on developing a theoretical position of Black radicalism in West, through the concept of Blackness. Much effort has been made to connect this expression of Blackness to the Pan-Africanism on the African continent, and to tie Black people in the West into the history of colonialism and experience of imperialism. It is here argued that Blackness and Africanism are different articulations of the same conception. Garvey and Malcolm X represent the foundation of the exposition of Black radicalism, and the both the development and influence of their work are truly Diapsoric in nature, touching all parts of the Diaspora. However, the focus being on Blackness in the West, there has not been a thorough examination of contributions to Black radicalism from Africa, with notable exceptions including Fanon, Cabral and an in depth exploration of neo-colonialism. Such work is vitally important, but is beyond the remit of this study.

The purpose of the study is to reclaim the tradition of Black radicalism and explicate its use in contemporary British society. In this regard the thesis is not a critical examination of the Black supplementary school movement, nor a detailed critique of the Black experience

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[5] For further discussion of Dubois see Banner-Haley (2010) & Posnock (1997)

of schooling in Britain[6]. A work detailing the history and development of Black supplementary schools and Black alternative education, which is situated in a Black radical critique of the British school system is both necessary and vital, however, it is outside of the scope of this thesis. The aim is to define a Black radicalism articulated, predominantly through experiences of Blackness in the West, which can be utilised in contemporary Britain and the Lumumba school is examined as a potential space for the development of such an emergent Black radicalism.

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[6] Such work has been undertaken, for example see Phillips & Phillips (1998); Reay & Mirza (1997); Stone, 1981; Tomlinson (1988)

Black Radicalism

Radical simply means "grasping things at the root"

Angela Davis[7]

Introduction

Black radicalism has manifested differently across the centuries and continents. In this chapter, I will firstly define Black radicalism by outlining the history of Black radical thought and the key tenets of "Babylon system" and "self-help" that lie at the foundation of the movement. I will also explicate Black radical thought by developing an approach to critical Whiteness, based on Malcolm X's analysis, which will demonstrate how using the concept of Whiteness can transform such notions of class and interests, and form the basis of a thorough critique of the West. The second section of the chapter will critically evaluate the limits of Critical Race Theory (CRT), an emergent paradigm of racial theory in the academy that has theoretical links to a Black radical position. CRT will be used to explicate the political nature of Black radicalism, as though the two may share theoretical roots it will be argued that they fundamentally differ in that CRT is ideologically liberal and rooted in the status quo. Finally it will be argued that Black radicalism calls for the theoretical *and* practical overthrow of an inherently racist Western society, which empowers the Black community based on the optimism of revolution.

Defining Black Radicalism

Black radical thought

Black radical thought is often linked and reduced to the Black power movement that occurred in United States, beginning in the sixties (Joseph, 2008). However, the specific

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[7] In Griffin (1996: pg.69)

Black power movement in the United States was one of a number of Black radical political movements across the African Diaspora[8] that called for and attempted to bring down the system of White imperialism, from the end of the 19th century (Campbell, 1997). Perhaps the first example of Black radical politics linking across the Diaspora is Ethiopianism that arose in 1895 with the battle for Ethiopian independence from European powers. Across the world Black people identified with the struggle and saw Ethiopia's victory as their own (Campbell, 1997).

The politics of Black radicalism can be seen in the work of Marcus Garvey (1967/1923), George Padmore (1972/1937), Kwame Nkrumah (1998/1963), the development of Rastafarianism (Owens, 1976), and countless other examples across the Diaspora. These varied movements are connected by their radical take on society that highlights Western imperialism as the central feature to be overturned and a commitment to Blackness (though other terms have been used here) to unite and work as a driving force for liberation. Black radical politics and actions are a continuation of the struggles against Europeans in Africa and during enslavement, and also earlier conflicts with Arab invaders into Africa (Njoh, 2006). For example, Paul Bogle led a rebellion in Jamaica in 1865 with the slogans 'Cleave to the Black' and 'Colour for Colour' (Campbell, 1997), which had the same political and theoretical basis for the Black radicalism that followed. What sets aside Black radicalism from the Black rebellions, which were numerous, during enslavement is the connections forged across the Diaspora. The nature of enslavement meant that though encouragement was taken from uprisings in different countries, with the Haitian revolution having a particular effect (Dubois & Garrigus, 2006) it was not until emancipation that global movements such as Ethiopianism could emerge.

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[8] African Diaspora is a common term used to refer to all Black people of African descent including those descendants of the continent who have been dispersed, whether through enslavement or other means (Harris, 1996)

Another central reason to see Black radicalism as emerging after enslavement is the concept of Blackness. The emergence of Blackness is a result of the enforced movement of enslaved Africans. This highlights a key difference in Black radical thought in the wider Diaspora compared to Africa. Blackness takes on particular significance in the West because of the history of enslavement and delinking of ourselves to Africa. A process such as enslavement and the dehumanisation of Black people lead directly to attempts to reclaim and restore pride to Blackness, rooted in skin colour. In the West this was the primary success and is the lasting legacy of the Black radicalism; there is no longer any doubt that Black is beautiful. In Africa a similar process of dehumanisation took place and it was also necessary to reclaim and reaffirm pride in ourselves as Black people. South Africa is a prime example of this with Steve Biko's Black Consciousness Movement, for instance (Biko, 2004/1978). Though a more conciliatory politician such as Nelson Mandela (1994) is to some extent against the militant Black Consciousness stance of Biko, he nonetheless throughout his autobiography talks in terms of the Diaspora and links Garvey, Dubois, Martin Luther King and Malcolm X into his concept of African. It is clear that his view of Africaness is the same as other Black radical positions on Blackness, when he talks of the 'unbreakable umbilical cord connected black South Africans and black Americans, for we are together children of Africa' (Mandela, 1994: pg.698). If you are Black then you are African for Mandela. This is also important because what is Black is therefore African. So whilst the continent may have many Whites, Indians, Arabs residing within it, the definition of African is based on the culture and experiences of the native Black population. Other peoples can to an extent become African but they do so by adopting the culture of Black people on the continent. African authenticity is very much rooted in Blackness. Colour though, must take on a more central role for the former enslaved population because of the destruction of our ties to Africa. Attempts have been and are being made to reconnect us to our African past, in the

form of Afrocentricity (e.g. Asante, 1996; Bekerie, 1994), with Rastafarians and numerous groups arguing for a cultural return to the source. However, trying to unite around Africaness in the West is very problematic because the legacy of enslavement runs deep and the divisions created between Africa and the other parts of the Diaspora cannot necessarily be overcome by identifying directly with Africa. Blackness, as the physical mark of our history and ancestry is the only thing that ties and unites us. What the Black radical movement has been largely successful in is building a commitment to Blackness, and making it a positive symbol of pride and also a call to mobilisation.

Black radicalism throughout the Diaspora is a politics who's influence has travelled back and forth from the continent of Africa to various parts of the West. For example, Marcus Garvey, who never set foot in Africa, was an inspiration for the people of Ghana, Kenya, Tanzania and South Africa (Mandela, 1994; Nkrumah, 1998/1963), whilst Malcolm X's thinking was heavily influenced by Pan-African leaders such as Nkrumah (X, 1970), and the Rastafarians drew largely on Africa and the Kenyan Mau Mau in particular (Campbell, 1997; Edmonds, 1998). The political foundation of Black radical thought can be found in Pan-Africanism.

Pan-Africanism

Pan-Africanism is the political philosophy that the African continent must unite as a political and economic bloc. Nkrumah, the first president of Ghana, details the theory and practice behind the concept in his (1998/1963) book *Africa Must Unite*. The starting point for Nkrumah is the impact of colonialism on the continent of Africa. Using Ghana as his example he explains how the colonial master of the United Kingdom only developed the country in order to exploit both natural resources and the human market. As the below example shows,

the colonial relationship is one that has a twofold negative impact on the colonised. Firstly the natural materials are taken then sold back at higher prices once commoditised:

> A British firm owning lime plantations here... actually expresses the juice from the fruit before shipping it in bulk to the United Kingdom and exporting it back to us bottled, to retail in stores at a high price. Though we had the raw material necessary for their manufacture, every bottle used in this country was imported. These facts have a kind of Alice in Wonderland craziness about them which many will find hard to accept (pg.27)

Rodney (1972) also extensively details the colonial organisation of African society, and how Europe underdeveloped the continent to service her own needs. Nkrumah (1998/1963) inherited a country whose infrastructure was meant to service Britain rather than Ghana. This is the fundamental problem that colonialism creates, countries cannot survive on their own because they were not built to. Nkrumah outlines national projects, including building roads, schools and hospitals in order to allow the country to support itself and thrive. At this juncture there is little radical about the philosophy as few would dispute the devastating facts of colonial rule on the continent. What separates Pan-Africanism is that rather than seeing colonialism as something in the past that the West can atone for, it views colonialism as continuing but under a different guise, what Nkrumah calls *neo-colonialism.*

In this neo-colonial arrangement countries in Africa are formally free and independent, yet remain under the control of the West through economic dominance. Nkrumah has a stark warning when he writes 'one of the worst things that can happen to less developed countries is to receive foreign aid with political and economic strings attached' (pg.101). Central to the idea of Pan-Africanism is that the West continues to exploit Africa and therefore the aid offered can never be the solution to the problems of the continent. Beckford (2007) uses Ghana as a modern day example of how neo-colonialism works. Rice

production in the country was protected by an embargo on cheap foreign imports and until the eighties domestic rice production soared. However, when the IMF loaned Ghana money, one of the conditions was that she open up her markets to foreign rice. Fast forward to contemporary Ghana and there is no longer any domestic rice production because it cannot compete with cheap foreign imports. As Beckford explains, the West still maintains the power to underdevelop the continent of Africa. The Pan-African critique of Western society is central to Black radicalism in the West. The Black power movement, for example, has been seen as the Western face of Pan-Africanism (Carmichael, 1971).

Babylon system & self-help

Key to understanding a Black radical critique is the concept that racism lies at the core of Western society. This is most poetically defined by the Rastafarians who refer to Babylon system being the organisation of Western society that 'down'presses Black people (Owens, 1976). As Bob Marley (2001/1979) explains,

Babylon system is the vampire,

Falling empire,

Suckin' the blood of the sufferers,

Building church and university,

Deceiving the people continually,

Me say them graduatin' thieves and murderers...

Babylon system is set up against the Black and the poor and above Marley uses the example of institutions producing 'thieves and murders' to reproduce the cycle of downpression. It is the system that keeps Black people down, and not individual racists within that system (this will be examined further, below).

In the Black radical tradition the concept of Whiteness as pervasive and controlling in society is implicit from the condemnations of Western society from Paul Bogle to the lyrics of Bob Marley. Critical Whiteness is not necessarily always seen as the work of Black radicalism, however, which involves improving the Black community. So whilst White society is critiqued the audience is Black people and about improving the conditions and building the community. Marcus Garvey (1967/1923: pg.25) is a good example of such an approach that attempts to speak to Black people about confronting our problems and embodies the philosophy of self-help,

> The best of the race does not live on the patronage and philanthropy of others, but makes an effort to do for itself. The best of the great White races doesn't fawn and beg before Black, Brown and Yellow men, they go out create for self and thus demonstrate the fitness of the race to survive; and so the White race of America and the world will be informed that the best in the Negro race is not the class of beggars...but the group amongst us who is honestly striving to do for themselves

In fact, Garvey spent more time chiding the Black community for not utilising our talents and helping ourselves to overcome the problems we face. In a speech sampled by Damian Marley (2005) Garvey proclaims,

> If you cannot do it, if you are not prepared to do it then you will die. You race of cowards, you race of imbeciles, you race of good for nothings. If you cannot do what other men have done, what other nations have done, what other races have done then you yourself shall die.

Self-help is a central theme of Black radicalism, thus the focus is on building Black identity, community and nations. This theme of self-help is drawn directly from the diagnosis of racism residing at the core of Western society.

If we accept that society is *inevitably* structurally racist then the response from Black radicalism is for Black people to form alternative social structures, i.e. institutions that can protect us from a racist society (this idea will be developed in Chapter Four). Far from the structural account of racism disempowering the community, Black radicalism offers agency in the collective struggle of the Black community to create alternative and supportive independent social structures. For Black radicalism this is where the importance of Africa and Pan-Africanism becomes central.

For Black people residing in the West there are always going to be limitations in creating Black independent structures confined as we are to, as Lorde (1984) puts it, using the master's tools to craft a position in his house. Africa offers the possibility of creating a truly independent political, economic and social system. Pan-Africanism has as its goal to unify the continent so that the wealth of natural resources can be used to create such an independent system (Nkrumah, 1998/1963). It is for this reason that Black radicalism is tied into a global Diaspora with Africa at the centre, as Garvey (1967/1923: pg.6) argues 'let Africa be our guiding star- our star of destiny'. It is the structural diagnosis of the immovability or racism from the West that leads to the ultimate agency of Black people from the radical perspective. Far from the acknowledgement of permanent racism being a millstone that disables the community it is the ultimate redemption as Garvey (1967/1923: pg.6) argues,

> How dare anyone tell us that Africa cannot be redeemed, when we have 400,000,000 men and women with warm blood coursing through their vein? The power that holds Africa is not Divine. The power that holds Africa is human, and it is recognised that whatsoever man has done, man can do.

From the Black radical position the power of others, the West, is being used to suppress the power of Black people and the continent of Africa. To overcome this Black people need to unite and use our power to create independent institutions and states to fight off oppression[9].

Critical Whiteness

A focus on building Black independent institutions due to the diagnosis of permanent racism explains the lack of detailed critiques of Western society in Black radicalism. Such critiques are implicit but Malcolm X (1971) is one of the first, and most prominent, Black radicals to directly address and take Whites to task for their role in society. In order to understand how this critical Whiteness was developed by Malcolm we have to start with its articulation in the religious doctrine of the Nation of Islam (NOI).

The NOI creation story holds that the original people on Earth were Black and the evil scientist Mr Yacub genetically bred the lighter of the race to produce the blond-haired blue, eyed devils we know as White people. Malcolm X (1971: pg.51) explains how Yacub,

> could teach this man a science called tricknology, which is a science of tricks and lies, and then this weak man would be able to use that science to trick and rob and rule the world.

Notoriously, the NOI deemed Whites a devil race, whose entire purpose was to bring hell to Earth and control the dark-skinned people of the world. Here we have a condemnation of White society on the basis of Whiteness, which is the foundation stone of a critical examination of Whiteness. Much of the work of Malcolm X is based around this idea of criticising and deconstructing hegemonic Whiteness. In one of the most famous parts of his autobiography, he explains how he looked up Black and White in the dictionary and found all

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[9] For a fuller discussion of power in Black radicalism see Wilson (2005)

the negatives for Black and the positives for White (2001/1965). Malcolm would spend time talking at predominantly White universities and Angela Davis's experience of one such talk is instrumental in understanding the role these talks played for Malcolm. Angela Davis (2004: pg. 126-127) was excited to hear Malcolm speak at Brandeis University but when she got there she felt out of place,

> I was shocked to hear him say, speaking directly to his audience, "I'm talking to you! You!! You and your ancestors, for centuries, have raped and murdered my people!" He was addressing himself to an all-White crowd and I wondered whether...other Black people in the audience felt as uncomfortable and outrageously misplaced as I did. Malcolm was addressing himself to White people, chastising them, informing them of their sins...For White people, listening to Malcolm had been disorienting and disturbing.

Malcolm was directly taking Whites to task for the system of racism underpinned by their Whiteness. Davis describes this as being 'disorienting and disturbing' for Whites. Being tied together with the slave master and the segregationist was not at all comfortable for the liberal Whites on the university campus. This is the power of critical examinations of Whiteness as it shatters the illusion of racism being predicated by a few bad apples. All in the system are not only beneficiaries of racism but importantly involved in reproducing inequality.

The early, NOI Malcolm predicated his critique of Whiteness on the level of the ontological position of being White. Whites were bred to be devils and therefore could not go outside of this, it was an innate and built in evil[10]. Elijah Mohammed predicted Whites would be wiped out in the coming Armageddon and therefore it was up to Black people whether to

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[10] This concept of ontological White devils has been updated by the Welsing (1991), and her argument that Whites are genetically recessive and therefore fear annihilation by dark-skinned people and are compelled to control them.

'integrate into this wicked race' and 'be destroyed along with them' or to separate (X, 1971: pg.64).

Whilst the NOI condemned all individual Whites as devils, Malcolm moved to a position where he critiqued White society as being the devil, rather than all individual within it. The history and contemporary formation of the West, he argued, were evidence of this and needed to be combated. Malcolm still firmly believed in the politics of Blackness and attempted to set up Black independent institutions but also now had a role for Whites in changing society,

> Whites who are sincere should organise themselves and figure out some strategy to break down the prejudice that exists in White communities. This is where they can function more intelligently and more effectively, in the White community itself, and this has never been done. (X, 1971: pg.164)

Here we have the essence of critical Whiteness: the idea that Whites must critically examine their history and present in order to understand how mainstream society needs to change if equality is truly the goal. What Malcolm is hoping for is that Whites can see how society is devilish and make moves to change it. The problem that Malcolm encountered was that on hearing the critique,

> most of them [White liberals] were so bent on distinguishing themselves from the slave master and the Southern segregationist it never struck them that they themselves could begin to do something concrete to fight racism (Davis, 2004: 127)

This is a particularly bleak outlook, from the point of view of Western society, because it removes any potentially redemptive figures. What becomes clear when we view

racism at the centre is that on all levels Whites from the richest to the poorest, but to different extents, benefit from the racial exploitation of dark skinned people.

The West as Whiteness

Developing the critique of Whiteness from a Black radical perspective is necessary to fully understand the analysis of Western society. As society has developed and moved away from overt racism, chastisements of Whites are no longer enough to bind the community together. Malcolm X lays a complex and rich foundation upon which a critical examination of Whiteness can be a strength of Black radical thought rather than the hindrance that simple caricatures of 'White Devils' can become.

West (2002) argues that the foundation of Western society made racism inevitable, when the West came into contact with other peoples. From this point of view there was never a need to justify enslavement as Africans were taken to be inhuman from the first point of contact. If we look at how the natives were treated in the Caribbean we can see this process. Okuefuna (2007) outlines in the documentary *Racism: A History* how Europeans enslaved and committed genocide that wiped out most of the indigenous population of the Caribbean. This genocide and enslavement was uncontroversial and in fact only questioned *after* the Europeans had interacted with the natives, marrying them etc. and realising they were human. The Spanish turned to Africa precisely because Africans were deemed to be sub-human, our Black skins and features connecting us to the animal world. The mechanism for the production of racial inequalities is Whiteness, and importantly is that Whiteness is deemed to be superior.

Niro (2003) outlines how the ideas behind racism are inherent in the Enlightenment thought of the seventeenth century. Not simply in the individually racist beliefs of philosophers such as Kant (Henry, 2007) but in the actual foundation of the philosophy. Niro argues that the portrayal of Western society as developing towards full understanding of both

the scientific and social arenas fundamentally imbues the West as superior, as *the* society that can produce such understandings. The tradition of Western societies and beliefs of superiority is longstanding, for example, the Crusades of the 12th century and the Greek definition of all else as 'barbarians' (Goldner, 1997). The West becomes the monolithic beacon of truth. It is also important to understand that the concept of Western superiority predates any notion of race based on colour in Europe (Niro, 2003). This is vital to the concept of Whiteness as it deals with one of the major criticisms of the concept: that White groups have been subjected to discrimination similar to that of dark skinned people (Cole, 2009). If this is the case, then can Whiteness be so pervasive?

What is being argued here is that the superiority inherent in Enlightenment thought and the modern basis of our society is predicated primarily on the basis of being of the West (Hall, 2007). The West is an imperfect phrase as it includes geographical regions from across the globe. The emergence of the modern West is enveloped with the foundation of modernity and begins with a group of Western European exploiting the natural resources and people of other continents (Hall, 2007). Those from countries inside Europe but less advanced were subject to discrimination, for example depictions of the Irish in Britain (Garner, 2004). It is here argued that this is because they were not deemed to be of the West and were therefore inferior. The treatment of Jewish people throughout Western history is also related to this, in that they are not necessarily seen to be of the West. All those outside of the norms of the West are therefore branded inferior and subject to discrimination. Though this may look similar to racist discrimination of dark skinned people it is in fact very different. The reason for this is one of *becoming*.

The discovery of dark-skinned people led La Peyere, in the seventeenth century, to develop a polygenesis thesis on descent whereby the different colours had divergent precursors (Goldner, 1997). This is one of the first codified examples of racial formation. The

very idea that African, Native Americans, or Asians could be from the same family tree as Europeans shook the West in a way that Eastern Europeans or the Irish could not. Whiteness as a concept does not exist until the encountering of people of different skin colours, but when it does it is codified in the rhetoric of the West. To be Western becomes to be White. For those 'backward' Europeans such as the Irish, they are never relegated out of the White family tree, but as Ignatiev (1995) argues are given the opportunity to become White by adhering to the values of the West. So whilst Irish immigrants to Britain may have faced the signs reading 'no blacks, no Irish, no dogs' (Wray, 2003: pg.52) the trajectory of their descendents is markedly different from those of darker skin. The Irish have disappeared to the extent that ten percent of the population of Great Britain is of Irish descent and this is not a social issue (BBC, 2004). From the recent coverage of immigration from Poland it would be easy to think that this is the first time we have had large numbers move here from that country. The reality, however, is that at the same time as dark skinned migration there was mass migration of Poles who faced discrimination in the UK at the time (Solomos, 1993). It is here argued that their children have completely disappeared into the fold of Whiteness, which simply cannot be said for those descendant of immigrants from the Caribbean, Africa and Asia.

Black people can never become White and receive the benefits that come with it, however, that does not mean that all Whites are therefore better off than all Black people in society. If we take the example of schooling, the debate has recently centred on the underachievement of White working class boys (Casson & Kingdon, 2007). The underachievement of White working class boys is by no means a recent phenomena with perhaps the classic work carried out in this field being done by Willis (1977). Willis's argument was that the culture of the schools was set up to reproduce inequalities in society, such that the middle class stay prosperous and the working class working. Bourdieu's work

on cultural capital has been widely applied to the schooling situation to argue that having access to the correct cultural codes is as important as any 'talent' within the individual (Figueroa, 1991). It is argued that the school is organised around the habitus of the middle class and that this implicitly excludes those from working class backgrounds (Willis, 1997). What has to be taken into account when discussing Whiteness is that the norms of the concept are derived from those at the top of society. Hegemonic Whiteness is not defined by just anyone, but is codified by those in power.

Harris (1993) talks of Whiteness as property, as the right to define acceptability and exclude those who deviate from the created norms. This can exclude poor Whites, or Eastern Europeans, and certainly works against those of a darker hue. If success is in part predicated on the acquisition, or at least the affectation of the cultural codes of the dominant, then perhaps the barriers are not those of colour but culture and poor Whites are equally discriminated against by the educational system. The issue becomes about acquiring the necessary cultural capital which Black students are able to do as are other groups. Looking at experiences on the university campus, many working class White students complain of feeling uncomfortable surrounded by middle class students, teachers and expectations (Reay, 2009). Again we can see here how marginalisation can be explained in terms of class and culture. At the same time that many Black students complain of feeling isolated by the cultural codes of redbrick universities, there are many who feel at ease having been raised in more middle class environments. The irony here is that with increased access to society for minority groups it is possible for some Black people to acquire the hegemonic cultural codes of Whiteness better than their White counterparts. However, there remain exclusions of Whiteness for those in the Black middle class. First and foremost is discrimination based on colour. When controlling for class in education, for example, Black students still do not receive equal grades at GCSE level (Steven, 2007) and even when gaining university

qualifications Black people are significantly less likely to be employed or receive wages on a par with the average for their educational level (HESA, 2007). Though access to the benefits in Western society may be dependent, in large part, on the displaying of the cultural capital of the White middle class, there remain benefits of Whiteness that are excluded to Black people regardless of socioeconomic standing.

Working class Whiteness

Whiteness has acted to shape the history of the interaction of poor Whites and dark skinned immigrants. The first race riot dates as far back as the twenties in Cardiff where White Dockers took exception to the presence of African workers and their contact with White women (Scobie, 1972) and 1958 saw riots for similar reasons in Notting Hill (Fryer, 1984). The policy of excluding Black and Asian workers from the trades unions has also been well documented (Virdee, 2000). The White working class has been very protective over the years of the White working class and its culture. It is not a coincidence that the BNP thinks of itself as the voice of the White working classes. The same ideas of superiority and empire that underpin Whiteness from the top also lie at the foundations of the bottom. To some extent this explains why Black Caribbean immigrants have been better culturally integrated into the culture of the working class than British Muslims (Bisin et al, 2004; Maxwell, 2006). Caribbeans speak the same language, drink and socialise in ways much more similar to the White working class than British Muslims. The stark cultural differences of the Islamic faith make it much more difficult for this cultural mixing and no doubt lie at the heart of much of the hostility shown towards British Muslims. To be White is to be right, and if you can't be White then adhering as close to the norms (be they middle or working class) is of top priority. Indeed, overt racism is often most acute in working class areas, which tends to belie the idea of solidarity in poverty (Rex & Moore, 1971).

The overt racism, which has been and remains a feature of White working class Britain can explained away in both the liberal and Marxist traditions. For liberals, it is a simple case of lack of education. Sections of the working class are unexposed to the values of our cosmopolitan, enlightened world and therefore behave in counter modern ways. Multiculturalist policy is primarily blamed, as it said to segregate people and leads to lack of understanding (McGhee, 2005). Ignorance is the cause of racism in this argument. However, far from being due to lack of contact, working class hostility towards Black and Asians, both historically and in the present, is better explained as being about proximity and resources. Though there may be more overt acts of racism displayed in the working class, Rex & Tomlinson (1979) argues that this would not necessarily be different if the middle classes were forced to live with the dark immigrants. Racism is not something isolated in the unlearned individual poor Whites and it is argued that the reaction to new Black and Asian citizens was almost inevitable due to the racist nature of society. Whilst middle class Whites could reject having to share their neighbourhoods with people of different hues, the working class did not have this option. The planned settlement of Caribbean workers in the then middle class enclave of Northfield in 1963 is a fine example of how the middle class was 'protected' from contact with immigrant communities (Rex & Moore, 1971). Racism in the working class stems from the imperial basis of society that elevates Whiteness to a superior position. Rex & Tomlinson (1979) argue that this belief in superiority and then having to live in close proximity to immigrant communities manifests itself in the overt racism of the working classes.

In a Marxist scheme working class racism is partly due to a manifestation of contact and competition. Black and Asians were placed in proximity to working class Whites and compete for the same jobs and resources and this is where the resentment and hostility emanates (Miles, 1989). This is a process of divide and rule which keeps us from realising

that we are all oppressed and in the fight against the ruling class together (Miles & Phizacklea, 1977). In the conspiracy that Marxism presents, the White working class are the victims of oppression but also the redemptive figures, heroes that will push society forward into a new liberated phase (Robinson, 1992). Ignored in the Marxist scheme is the reality of the benefits of Whiteness accrued to the White working class and their interests in maintaining capitalist society.

It is slightly disingenuous to look at class as an indices of discrimination in the same way we look at race. In capitalist society it should come as no surprise that those who have the least money achieve the least relative success. Society is organised around this principle. To argue that socio-economic status is related to reproduction of socio-economic status is to some extent redundant. More fundamental to the issue of what disadvantages being poor brings, is the question of how we arrive in positions of iconic inequalities. We cannot have a serious discussion on this point until we understand *why* people are in the situation they find themselves. This is the failure of class analysis in terms of race, that it takes no account of what makes people poor. In this regard we have to look at class through the lens of race.

Racial class

The race or class debate is well worn and integral to the Black radical tradition (Robinson, 1983). It is here argued that it is not a case of either or, but class systems that develop under racial conditions. If we take a class system to be societal relations based on socio-economic status and the resulting cultural connections, (Gubbay, 1997; Pakulski & Waters, 1996), then the British class system was formed before the arrival of Black people and Asians (though the colonial subjects are a fundamental part of how class in Britain was lived before our physical arrival). In reality, the concept of class itself was formed in a self-imposed racial vacuum as Marx chose to ignore the oppression outside of Europe (Solomos

& Back, 1995). Class then becomes a concept developed to discern between different groupings of Whites based on the exploitation of labour. British middle and working classes were formed and highly racialised (by their de-racialised nature) *before* the presence of Black and Asian people in the country. When mass immigration did occur, how people were filtered into this class system depended entirely on race. The jobs open to us, the treatment in education and by the trades unions etc. were all impacted by our racial backgrounds (Scobie, 1972). Countless 'middle class' Black immigrants were forced to take working class jobs when entering Britain (Fryer, 1984). From a traditional Marxist standpoint when Black people arrive we are filtered into the class system and become members of the existing class (Harris, 1927). Miles (1989) attunes to this view by seeing Black people as adopting a class fraction within the larger class. However, I would take this argument further and posit that the different groups continue to develop along separate class structures, reflecting their differing histories and positions. It should be remembered that formations of 'class' existed in the colonies, and these were often viciously based on racial difference, i.e. the lighter the better (Sousa, 2009). What occurs is in different groups there will be different developments of those with similar economic position and cultural ties. So whilst capitalist society means you will have those in a racial group which are better off materially than others and they may form subgroups, this does not mean that there is solidarity across racial classes. The similarity of economic position between the Black and White workers does not necessarily equal brother/sisterhood. This is vitally important if we are to understand how to elevate ourselves out of poverty. For example, it is easy to argue that the problems in the Black community are solely material, however, this does not take into account that when income is accounted for Black students still do not receive the same levels of attainment as the average (Gillborn, 2008). I am not arguing that there is no Black middle class, rather that to be Black and middle class is very different than to be White and in the same economic position.

The formulation of the class structure is fundamental here. If we compare across ethnic groups we will find very different class structures. Black people as a group are composed of more poor people, and receive less income than Whites. In short there is a greater proportion of 'working class' Black people (St Louis, 2006). If we take economic position as determiner of outcome, then the question must be asked 'why are a greater proportion of Black people working class?'. You cannot answer this question without first analysing the history and present of race and racism. Class is framed by race on all levels.

One of the biggest failings of sociology is the restriction to national analysis (see Chapter Two for more detailed discussion). In particular when analysing minority groups this national myopia is problematic. It is sometimes almost as if our history starts when we come into the country. We cannot simply filter Black and Asian people into a pre-existing class system; we have to take a global account of how class structures arise, are maintained and interact. Taking into account the global nature of class is essential to truly understanding society, and when we do so we encounter a major difficulty with the concept of Whiteness, which is that of interests.

Interests

Whiteness has been complicated by developments in global society. It would have been relatively straightforward to argue that though the White working class were being exploited by the ruling class, both groups interests were still aligned because poor Whites benefitted from the exploitation of enslaved and then colonial subjects. In a primarily all White national society these bonds of Whiteness are very apparent. If we were to divine a global class structure, during colonial times, it would have been relatively simply racial in nature, with the Whites benefitting from the super exploitation of most of the world, to varying degrees. This argument itself is still relevant because all those living in Western

society accrue benefits taken from the 'Rest' (Hall, 2007). Access to the infrastructure, resources and the chance (however limited) of social mobility depend on the exploitation of the labour and resources of those in the Third World (Wallerstein, 2005). Mass migration to the West by formerly enslaved and colonialised subjects has complicated this issue of Whiteness and interests, however, because we now find ourselves benefitting from the exploitation of those in the Diaspora. Taking a global perspective on class it might make sense to collapse the notion of racial class and to present Black and Asians as being together in the complicit and beneficiary classes previously inhabited solely by Whites.

A Black liberal view of this interest matrix is to throw our lot in with the rest of Western society. Access being identified as the key to improvement of conditions the Black liberal argument would see us integrate into the class system of the nations in which we reside. Exclusion from the benefits of the system is the problem for Black people, from this position (Joseph, 2008). Though hegemonic Whiteness is very much about exclusion, it is not a concept that Black liberalism engages with because integration in to the system is the aim. Critically analysing Whiteness is not conducive to bringing along the support of White liberals, which is essential to the cause of access. In fact, much of the criticism of Black radicalism levelled from liberals and the mainstream, is that it scares people and turns away support from Whites (Joseph, 2008). Here we can see one of the key distinctions between the Black liberal and radical positions, that of internationalism. Whilst Black liberalism tends to be confined to national borders and look for allies within; the Black radical purview connects across the Diaspora and finds support in Black people's around the globe, particularly in Africa, which is the foundation stone of Black radicalism.

It is the connection to the Diaspora that transforms and asks us to rethink the issue of interests. Rather than see interests along economic lines (or those of access), we are urged to view the interests of the Diaspora as a whole. Our connection to the people of Africa and the

Caribbean who are being exploited by and excluded from the West is a link that is argued to tie to us their cause. The argument is that through our Blackness we are connected to and therefore are responsible for Black people worldwide (Carmichael, 1971; Garvey, 1986/1923). Race consciousness trumps material interests in this equation. Ideas of race consciousness may seem similar to that of class consciousness and the mobilisation of the proletariat, however they are distinct in a key regard. Marxism is fundamentally based on the politics of interest with the argument being that all the workers are exploited and it will materially therefore be of benefit to overthrow the ruling class. What Marxism neglects is the benefit of Whiteness (or being in the West) and that the workers in the West depend on the exploitation of the workers in the 'Rest'. Black radicalism is based not solely on a material argument (for the conditions of people in the Diaspora are key), but one based on history and normative collectivity. It is not in all Black people's material interests to support an overthrow of imperial society. What is therefore being asked (in some cases) is to forego the individual for the collective of Black people worldwide.

Limits of Critical Race Theory

Critical Race Theory

Critical Race Theory (CRT) places racism at the centre of the organisation of Western society; therefore representing a challenge to the dominant perspectives of race discussed in Chapter Two provided by Marxism and Liberalism, which place race at the margins. CRT is useful from the Black radical perspective as it diagnoses the role in which race permeates and is a permanent feature of Western society.

CRT emerges out of critical legal studies in the States (Cook, 1995). Derrick Bell, the founder of the movement, was disaffected by the failure of the momentous civil rights legislation in regards to improving the lives of Black Americans. For Bell (1992) civil rights

activism and the belief that full equality in the United States was possible, were based on the myth that American society was designed for and/or capable of full participation of its Black citizens. Bell cites the 14th amendment, which guaranteed citizenship to the formerly enslaved, as an example of legislation that on the face of it provides equality to Black people in America but in reality was about protecting White interests. He argues that the motive behind the amendment was that Northern states did not want the South to be able to exploit the labour of Black Americans by paying them inhuman wages. Once the law was enacted and served this purpose, Bell argues it was then largely ignored. The 14th amendment sets the foundation of the subsequent legal reforms in the States, which appear to be about equality but without ever making things more equal. The legal gains made are even a problem for Bell because,

> the society has managed to discriminate against Blacks as effectively under the remedy as under the prior law- more effectively really, because discrimination is covert, harder to prove, its ill effects easier to blame on Black victims (pg.104)

The radical aspect of CRT lies in this condemnation of Western society and the denunciation of the gains made by the civil rights movement as ultimately futile towards the goal of full equality, which is impossible within the system. Bell states this clearly,

> Black people will never gain full equality in this country. Even those herculean efforts we hail as successful will produce no more than temporary "peaks of progress," short-lived victories that slide into irrelevance as racial patterns adapt in ways that maintain white dominance. This is a hard-to-accept fact that all history verifies. We must acknowledge it, not as a sign of submission, but as an act of ultimate defiance. (pg.12)

Persistent inequality

One of the mainstays of CRT research is to highlight the persistent racial inequalities in the school system. Gillborn (2008) is a good example of such work, presenting the argument that racial inequalities in education are far from improving over the years and are actually getting worse. He argues that a higher percentage of the lower attaining groups may be receiving the standard of 5 A-Cs, however the gap between those groups and the top attainers is rising. Parsons (2009) found that the rates of exclusion for African Caribbean students, one of the biggest complaints from the community, has also remained significantly and consistently higher than for other groups.

Research into these inequalities and uncovering the same grim picture over the years is by no means new (See Steven, 2007 for a review of this field). What marks out the CRT authors is their treatment of how these inequalities are so resistant to change despite all the efforts to address them in the last 20 years or so. Their focus is not on the environmental, socioeconomic or cultural factors but is a fundamental critique of the policy that has been enacted to address the issue. As Parson (2009) explains "[EMAG funding] altered *the processes and experiences* of minority young people. It has done little to alter the *outcomes* recorded for them." (pg.262, original emphasis). It is the educational reforms themselves that are being questioned by the CRT critiques.

Gillborn (2008) explains that were the inequalities a coincidence we could simply ignore them and leave society to continue functioning perfectly well with these strange aberrations. Instead he examines the issue of conspiracy using an allegory of a student a Black student to his White teacher. The student is convinced it is a conspiracy by White society to keep the Black population in check. After all it could not simply be a coincidence and there must be intent involved in order for such a consistent reproduction, he reasons. His professor, however, argues that is not a conspiracy rather 'it's worse than that' (pg.9). For the

professor, there is no conspiracy, no set plan to pour money and legislation into the issue simply to disguise the continued discrimination. The reproduction is automatically produced by society without anyone needing to orchestrate it.

The Liberal Coincidence

Such a CRT analysis of racism is important because it takes the concept to a much more fundamental level than liberalism, which it is primarily a critique of. As discussed in Chapter Two, racism in liberalism is very much an individual affair. There are counter modern individuals who perpetuate racist acts in society. Therefore legislation banning these acts prevents the racist individuals from discriminating and steers individuals away from racist beliefs. Joseph (2008) explains how it is this view that allowed liberal Whites, in the US during the civil rights era, to descend en masse to the South to solve the problem of racism, yet ignore the plight of the Black population in the Northern cities in which they resided. Whilst there may not have been legal barriers in the North the effects of racism were just as prevalent and revealed in 'poor public schools, overcrowded housing projects, and high rates of unemployment' (pg.52). Racism was identified as the action of the unenlightened South, disconnected from the enlightened and free North.

It is not wholly fair to characterise liberal understandings of racism solely in this light. White liberals have also been active in the northern America cities and in the UK and following Carmichael and Hamiltons' (1969) definition of 'institutional racism' have targeted liberal institutions such as the schools and the police as sites of structural racism (Better, 2007). The idea of racism as widespread and institutional is today accepted. However, if we look beneath the veneer of the discussion around institutional racism we will still find much of the discourse is individually oriented. For example, when talking of institutional racism in the police force the starting point is usually racist officers (Lea, 2002). The documentary *The*

Secret Policeman amply demonstrates this point. The show attempted to uncover institutional racism in the police force but drew this conclusion,

> The majority of the officers I met will undoubtedly turn out to be good, non-prejudiced ones intent on doing the job properly. But the next generation of officers from one of Britain's top police colleges contains a significant minority of people who are holding the progress of the police service back. (Daly, 2003)

What is demonstrated here is how it is the institutions responsibility to weed out the bad seeds, the individual officers who act in racist ways.

The other panacea most often offered to the issue of an institutionally racist police force is to increase the percentage of Black and Asian officers (Holland, 2007). This addresses the issue in two ways. Firstly, on a strictly individual level it is presumed that minority police officers will not be racist and therefore not perpetuate racism in the institution. The formula of non-racist individuals equalling non-racist institutions prevails here. Secondly, we can also see the anti-segregation logic at work again. The argument being that a culture of racial prejudice can develop within an organisation if there are enough dark individuals to around to influence it. What these arguments miss is the truly institutional level at which organisations such as the police are endemically racist. As KRS ONE makes clear in his song *Black Cop* in the line 'it's the Black cop killing Black kids in Johannesburg' (1993). In other words the colour of the individual police officers makes no difference if the institution itself is racist.

Even when we do focus on individual racism it is also important to look at the process by which 'racist' individuals are formed and in the liberal view it is by way of coincidence. In the liberal view society is open and non-racist and is therefore at pains to understand the

emergence of the minority of racists who go against the grain of society (Crenshaw, 1995). This is emblematic in the treatment of the British National Party (BNP).

The party has risen from relative obscurity in the past few years, winning local council seats and gaining its first success in national elections by having two Members of European Parliament elected in 2009 (Porter & Bingham, 2009). The BNP is a far-right party whose membership is restricted to those of 'indigenous Caucasian' ethnicity and spells out its openly racist aim to ethnically cleanse the nation in article 1(b) of its constitution,

> The British National Party stands for the preservation of the national and ethnic character of the British people and is wholly opposed to any form of racial integration between British and non-European peoples. It is therefore committed to stemming and reversing the tide of non-white immigration and to restoring, by legal changes, negotiation and consent, the overwhelmingly white make up of the British population that existed in Britain prior to 1948. (BNP, 2009)

The response to these individual racists who constitute the BNP had been one of complete non-engagement by mainstream politicians and the media until October 2009 when the BBC invited the leader of the party Nick Griffin to appear on the debate show *Question Time* (Muir, 2009). The show sparked an uproar from many quarters who thought that allowing the party airtime would give their views legitimacy (Livingstone, 2009). Central to this argument of non-engagement is that the view of the BNP as completely illegitimate within our modern society. The idea that people could hold such views, espouse them and vote for them seems incomputable for the average liberal. For people to rationally hold racist views would betray the myth of the enlightened and decent modern society that we are part of. The rhetoric goes that society has moved on and the BNP sympathisers have failed to, by some bizarre and sordid twist of fate. Therefore, we should not provide them a platform and pillory them at

every opportunity. As the former archbishop of Canterbury, Lord Carey, puts it (on the BBC's decision to invite Griffin), '[The BBC] errs that in a democracy all views should be heard. The views of the BNP are not simply false, they are dangerous, indeed and irredeemably evil' (Shah, 2009).

What is not acknowledged in the liberal response to the BNP is that far from their views being coincidental to society, they are drawn from it. The central theme of the BNP being that immigration of non-Whites into Britain has done damage to the "indigenous White" working class population is hardly an argument from the margins. The history of immigration policy towards those of a darker hue, on both sides of the political spectrum, has implicitly taken this position to the present day, putting greater restrictions on those who are not White in entering the country (Solomos, 1993). In the mainstream media the BBC (2008) ran a series of documentaries called *White* that explicitly asked the question of whether immigration had done harm to White workers. Their advertisement for the documentary series could have been taken directly from the BNP website. It depicts a White male face being written on in a variety of foreign languages with Black ink by a series of dark skinned hands, while the nationalist song 'Jerusalem' plays in the background. As the man's face is being covered in Black ink, someone writes 'Britain is changing' across his chin. Eventually his face is entirely covered in Black and as he closes his eyes he blends into the Black background, with the caption underneath asking 'is white working class Britain becoming invisible?'. It is difficult to see how the premise of this advert and series differs from the fundamental message of the BNP. With images such as these in the mainstream, and the prime minister and leader of the Labour party, no less, talking about 'British workers, for the British Jobs' (Jones, Helm & Wilson, 2007) it should not comes as a surprise that a party built around anti-immigration and Islamaphobia should have some success at the polls.

The important aspect in understanding the liberal take on race and racism, is that the legitimacy of the BNP within the mainstream system can never be acknowledged within this political ideology. To do so would be to wreck the myth of liberal society.

The Marxist conspiracy

Whilst the liberal account presents racism as a coincidence on the individual level, Marxism defines the concept as used by powerful groups use to control society (Robinson, 1983). It is the Bourgeoisie that pin down the working classes and create the ideological superstructure to contain and prevent the rise of the Proletariat (Marx & Engels, 2002/1888). Though I would argue that the structure agency debate in reference to Marxism misses the inherently agential nature given to the emerging Proletariat, in terms of those concepts used to divide and control, e.g. racism and sexism, all agency is given to dominant groups of individuals. In a Marxist account, racism and sexism are the creation of the Bourgeoisie in order to control and dominant and in a way they are their sole possession (Miles & Brown, 2003). The racist attitudes displayed by the White working classes are explained as a reaction to living in oppressed conditions and as false consciousness bestowed upon the oppressed in order to keep them down (Cole, 2008). Marxism implies a conspiracy on behalf of the ruling class with the Marxist explanation of racism being indicative of this.

Miles (1983) explains the Marxist view of how race was created by the ruling class in order to justify the enslavement of peoples firstly of Native American and then African descent. There was a need for the super exploitation of slave labour and so the powers that be created the concept of different races in order to justify and exploit them. The very concept of race itself is therefore a conspiracy. Racism is then built from this and later bestowed on the working classes in order to divide them from their dark brothers in arms. The important thing to note here is that this mechanism is clearly a conspiracy of the active agent of the

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Bourgeoisie, who create races to exploit them. As society develops and continues it is these same bourgeois individuals (or their later manifestations) that require racial exploitation and so conspire to promote the myth of racism and divide the people. The oppressed are not culpable and can do battle with the sinister Bourgeoisie who attempt to keep the myth alive. Conspiracies have antagonists and therefore protagonists who we can identify with and take up the mantle to fight the oppressors. The emerging proletariat are therefore presented as the hero of the piece, the redemptive figure of Western society (Robinson, 1992).

Liberal radicalism

The emerging academic tradition CRT presents a radically different theoretical position challenging the liberal and Marxist cornerstones of the knowledge of society. The most challenging aspect of CRT from the mainstream perspective is the charge that racism is a permanent feature of Western society. Here lies both the theoretical success of CRT but also its rhetorical failure, from the Black radical perspective. In theory CRT is a radical and new challenge to the mainstream, however, in practice it represents neither. Firstly, the radical critique which CRT presents is not novel, it is built upon much earlier Black radical positions. Secondly, though the theory itself may challenge dominant knowledge claims, it has remained trapped in the academy, which has removed the logical application of the radical theoretical position. In other words, CRT has taken up Black radical theory but ignored the praxis. It is therefore dubbed *liberal radicalism,* i.e. radical theory that in actuality reinforces the status quo of liberal society.

Maintenance of the status quo is evident in the solutions that CRT poses for the permanence of racism in education, and critical pedagogy is emblematic of this. Blake (1998) argues that we need a critical pedagolocial stance to challenge the mainstream values on race in the classroom. In Blake's work students are encouraged to create their own cultural texts

based on their life experiences. This is done to go outside of the standard literature of Whiteness typically taught in the schools and to help them engage with society and issues of race. Key to this critical pedagological stance is the dialogic nature of learning that is created by the creation of texts from students own experience's. Dialogic teaching practices are a hallmark of critical pedagogy and link back to Freire's (1972) work, which denounced mainstream education as objectifying and filling the students with the knowledge and values of the elite.

Essential to this process of dialogic learning is to understand the importance of positionality. Through critically analysing our own experiences we can place ourselves in a position relative to constructions of Whiteness and results of these constructions (Milner, 2007). Dialogic processes are as much about dialogue with mainstream and counter discourses as they are about discussions with the self and reflexively understanding our own positions. By producing the cultural texts from their experiences the students can locate themselves in racial discourse and society and Blake hopes to circumvent the discourse of Whiteness that is inherent in mainstream teaching to create a challenge to the dominant. Another example of critical pedagogy can be found in Tupper & Capellos' (2008) use of 'unconventional narratives' in the school setting. To overcome the negative ascriptions that were commonly used for the natives of Canada by Whites, they used stories that were unfamiliar to the students, of treaty signings, that challenged the stereotypical 'truths' of native society. Presenting these counter narratives, and alternative understandings from the perspective of the native population was aimed at being "productive of empathy...awareness of racism in society." (Tupper & Capello, 2008: pg.57). It is this awareness, by access to counter narratives, that is hoped will spur the students into taking on the ills of racism in society and urge them towards "social justice". However, central to the theory of CRT is that awareness is not enough.

Indeed, in a study of teachers' racial attitude Vaught & Castagno (2008: pg.110) found that,

> awareness did not lead to empathy amongst teachers, but resulted in a reinvention of meaning that reified existing, culturally constructed, racist frameworks ...racism adapts to any new ideology introduced, accommodating the discourse within a framework of continued racial supremacy.

The problem has not been that people are unaware, but that they are fully aware and yet continue to reproduce a racist society even with the best intentions. Bell (1992: pg.3) had a stark message on racism and advancement in society proclaiming that 'what we designate as "racial progress" is not a solution to that problem. It is a regeneration of the problem in a particularly perverse form.'. From this position, awareness of racism, or even Whiteness, would simply be accommodated into understandings that reproduce Whiteness. The idea that awareness could produce results is distinctly liberal and assumes that we are unaware of the problem. Greater knowledge and breaking down individual stereotypical understandings appear to be at the core of critical pedagogy. It is for this reason that it should be viewed not as a solution to the problem of Whiteness and racism, but as a 'regeneration' being 'particularly perverse' because of its good intent and further to this it actually goes against one of the core theoretical foundations of CRT.

'Social justice'

Further contradictions in the theory and practice of CRT emerge when it comes to the issue of 'social justice'. Social justice is littered through the writings of CRT and much progressive research. Milner (2008: pg.339) sees the role of CRT as being to, 'assist social-justice-oriented individuals in organising to actively do something, to change racist systems,

policies and practices'. Unclear is what is meant by social justice and also what it means to 'do something'. Civil rights practitioners are no doubt 'social justice oriented' and are certainly 'doing something' to change racist systems, however, CRT is founded on critiquing this action. In order to overcome the permanence of racism in society it must therefore be far more complex than supporting those with good intentions. Again, this is an idea that forms the basis of CRT and Milner (2008: pg.240) acknowledges as much when he earlier argues that **'**interests and their ideological convergence that are most profound for movements to be successful'. In order to sustain a successful movement ideological convergence is essential. This is what the social justice argument entirely misses. CRT cannot at once be in support of ideologically committed and interest driven groups whilst simultaneously agitating for vague coalitions of the well intentioned. It is here argued that CRT has been guilty of this twoness in theory; in practice CRT has only lent support to the latter. Again we can see how whilst radical in theory CRT has continued a pattern of academia maintaining the status quo by not following the conclusions of its theoretical statements.

One of the fundamental problems with CRT is that it removes itself from the process of radical action and therefore falls into the same trap of the civil rights activism it critiques: reinforcing the status quo. This is in no doubt related to the role of academia in society (see chapter 5 for a discussion) but is also allied to the liberal roots of the theory itself. Bell (1992) is resigned to the permanence of racism in society whilst also committed to continual struggle against it. He describes the struggle as '*both* the recognition of the futility of action ... *and* the unalterable conviction that something must be done, that action must be taken' (Bell, 1992*:* pg.198). What CRT presents then is a sort of claim of truth to power where stating the truth of oppression loudly and firmly is put forward as a solution to the problem. For Bell 'we *de*legitmate it [racism] if we can pinpoint it' (pg. 198). The role of CRT then, becomes that of leading chorus of rebellion against racial oppression. Some CRT theorists, even going as far

as to produce limited critical pedagogy is inappropriate, as Ladson-Billings (2004: pg.59) explains,

> CRT's project is to uncover the way pedagogy is racialised and selectively offered to students according to the setting, rather than to produce critical pedagogy.

For CRT the role becomes to speak out against the system, to denounce and draw attention to the problems of racism and Whiteness. In attempting to define Black radicalism we *must* separate out the theory from the praxis. To be truly radical means to go to the root, and this cannot be done without radical action. What CRT has done is to present what appears to be a radical theory, which allows advantaged Blacks (those in the academy) and well meaning Whites to feel proud about extolling. We are given the opportunity to indict and chant down the system, from a position where we can receive all the benefits from racial oppression. Diagnosing the problem is not enough, to be truly radical we have to treat it.

Conclusion

Black radicalism as a political ideology that presents a critique of mainstream society and platform for Black people to build upon, has been presented in this chapter. By analysing Critical Race Theory I have also attempted to define Black radicalism by showing what it is not. Perhaps the fundamental and most important difference between Black radicalism and CRT is the pessimism of the latter. However much we may take heart from calling out the system or marching on in the face of oppression, CRT sees no end to racism in society and is therefore ultimately pessimistic. Black radicalism is hallmarked by a never dying optimism, the absolute faith Babylon system will be overturned. The struggle in Black radicalism goes outside of the national borders and ties us into a Diaspora in a global struggle. So, improving

the conditions for Black people in the West is only a starting point for the struggle, and not the end point as in the Black liberal project. Racism is a permanent feature of Western society, so the goal of the Black radical is Pan-Africanism with true independence being found in a self-reliant, self-controlled and prosperous Africa (Nkrumah, 1998/1963). This is the overthrow of Babylon, the end of racism and the future that will be realised. Black radicalism is optimism. At the heart of Black radicalism is the overwhelming belief and commitment to the ideal that no matter how long the odds or the personal cost, the revolution will be come and we will create a fair society.

Critique of "Race From Above"

No serious scholar today believes in the existence, let alone the importance of 'race'

Martin Bernal[11]

Introduction

Race has largely been abandoned or relegated to scare quotes in academia, most particularly in the UK (Alexander & Alleyne 2002). The "end of race" has been declared (Gilroy, 1998), and many authors have turned their gaze to ethnicity in social research (Jenkins, 2005). Moves towards post-racial explanations have neglected the concept of Blackness, which is essential for understanding and mobilising people of African descent from a Black radical perspective as outlined in the previous chapter. The examination of Critical Race Theory in the previous chapter demonstrated how, even when race apparently lies at the heart of academic theory, the focus is rather on racism. Academia in the UK appears to have taken the stance of trying to overcome racism, whilst at the same time delegitimising the idea of race, and race consciousness. The relegation of race and Blackness in academia is predicated on three points in the literature, which will be challenged below.

Firstly, the prevailing explanation of race being created by Western society in order to justify the exploitation of "peoples of colour" worldwide will be discussed (Cole, 2003; Miles, 1989; Miles and Brown, 2003). The standard account is 'race from above' ignoring that Blackness is not simply a creation by Europeans. For Black people the basis of our identity was never biological or phenotypical but rather historical, cultural and experiential (Asante, 1996). Secondly, the preponderance of "political blackness" in the eighties in British research (Alexander, 2002), will be defined a misstep because it undermined a Black identity that was already political, and made the common mistake of sociology of restricting its

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[11] 1993: pg.50

analysis to national borders. Modood (1996) has argued that "political blackness" reifies the Black/White dualism as it homogenises "non-Whites". This reification of the Black/White dualism is central to the backlash against Blackness. Finally the postmodern perspective on Blackness as rigid and essentialist will be critiqued. It will be argued that Blackness is the basis of a real collective with the potential for political mobilisation. Understanding our African descent requires us to evaluate our position in a global society, uncovering oppression and forcing us to act. Yes, Blackness is diverse and fluid, but it is also rooted and essential to understanding our past, present and creating our futures.

Race from above

Marxist interpretation of race

The Marxist account of race is dominant within academia in terms of racial formation. The idea that dark skinned people are racialised by an oppressive system in order to be exploited by White society (Miles & Brown, 2003), is all pervasive. Race, and not simply racism, is a form of capitalist oppression from this viewpoint. There is no other basis to the category of race than the social construction of distinct groups in order for those of European descent to dominate. From this perspective, to *see* race is to *be* racist. From a Marxist point of view the only form of politics that can liberate society is class based, and organising around racial collectivity is to obscure the shared struggle of the "workers of the world" (Robinson, 1983). Race is entirely explained by class in order to divide and rule, and it is our duty to overcome this to unite.

Emblematic of such a position is Eric William's *Capitalism and Slavery* (1975). Williams goes to lengths to explain enslavement in capitalist terms and to tie working class Whites into a joint struggle against oppressive forces with enslaved Africans, arguing that 'seen in its historical perspective it [enslavement] forms a part of the general picture of the

harsh treatment of the underprivileged classes' (Williams, 1975: pg. 5). Throughout the book Williams attempts to place poor Whites who laboured in the Caribbean within the exploitation of the plantation, stressing the similarities between their experiences and those of enslaved Africans. Nowhere is this more absurd than in his arguments that poor Whites suffered a similarly traumatic experience as the middle passage, when earlier he admitted that Africans were stolen, chained and subject to higher suicide and mortality rates. However, it seems that the evidence must be moulded to support the conclusion that 'slavery was born not of racism; rather racism was the consequence of slavery' (pg.7). There is a strong history of Black Marxist intellectuals taking up such positions. Harris (1927: pg. 470) set an early tone by claiming that 'the negro was not enslaved because of his complexion'. In the Marxist account, Africans were enslaved because of the need for labour and races and racism were then created off the back of this need to justify the exploitation (Harris, 1925). The questionable logic behind this account is discussed in Chapter One[12], it is enough here to stress that for Marxists, people are racialised into categories that repress them and we need to therefore shatter the capitalist illusion of these racialised distinctions.

Liberal interpretations of race

Though Marxism is in many ways a critique of liberalism, on the issue of racial categorisations the two are similar in important ways. As with Marxism, racism is at the periphery rather than at the centre of the liberal view of society (Bell, 1992; Peller, 1995). Racialisation is a commonly used term in academia showing the level of acceptance of the Marxist formation of racial categories. Where the liberal view does differ is in the state of play at present. For liberals society has fundamentally changed since enslavement. Racism has moved to the margins, along with gender, sexuality and disability (Peller, 1995). From a

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[12] If racism did not exist prior to the exploitation, why did Europeans feel free to wipe out the natives of the Americas and then look past their own citizenry to Africa for labour on the plantations?

liberal standpoint the nature of the inequalities is the same and largely revolves around changing attitudes in order to address the inequalities produced. The dissolution of the Commission for Racial Equality and folding into the Equality and Human Rights Commission in the UK in 2006, shows how the state is conceiving of inequalities in this model (Hirsh, 2009). It is individuals in society who are racist, according to this view, and they need to be targeted. In a modern society phenotypical differences are meaningless and the ultimate goal of certain visions of liberalism is a colour blind society where people are judged 'not by the colour of their skin but the content of their personality' (King, 1963). Again, notice that to *see* race is to *be* racist. The justification here is slightly different, however, than from a Marxist standpoint.

Whilst for Marxism race is a category created by the West in order to dominate, and that category is still used for these purposes (Cole, 2003), for the liberal the West has (largely) moved beyond this position. Too see race is to be racist, because racial differences are a concept from the past and thus counter modern. Colour blindness is the appropriate rational, enlightened, liberal position and to recognise different races is a throwback to a backwards age (Crenshaw, 1995).

Discrimination against vs. Discrimination between

Malik (1996) recounts the history of phrenology and race science used to justify all kinds of inequality, and the strength of the "race is racism argument" account is to highlight how the concept is central to exploitation of people worldwide. The horrors of the Nazi death camps bought home (perhaps in ways enslavement and colonialism could not) the consequences of Western racial categorisations (Leach, 2005). Race as biology and deterministic of ability was used as the basis for genocide and these are all concepts that were seen as needing to be swept away. However, to do away with alternative concepts of race is

premature and misses the distinction between discrimination *against* and discrimination *between* (Younge, 1999).

Racism is fundamentally based on discrimination *against.* Different races are earmarked and placed into a hierarchy based on perceived phenotypical differences. Discrimination against needs to be rooted out and overcome. Discrimination *between*, however is the process of categorising difference based on a set criteria.

We constantly discriminate between set criteria, be it height, gender, personality attributes etc. It is a fallacy to suggest that discrimination between automatically leads to discrimination against. In the case of racism, because Europeans discerned different races and formed a hierarchy with themselves at the pinnacle does not mean that this is the only consequence of seeing race (Niro, 2003). It is well documented that the people Europeans encountered on their travels also drew categories based on phenotypical differences. Native Americans, for instance, referred to the settlers as "pale face" (Kilcup, 2000) and in Africa the difference in appearance was obvious to the native population (Mutwa, 1998). The difference between these categorisations is that in America the native population embraced the settlers with open arms (Mohawk, 1992) and in Africa trade links were formed and Whites welcomed (Rodney, 1972). In return they received genocide, enslavement and colonialism from their encounters with Whites. Just because the West has used difference to dominate, control and slaughter this does not make difference itself the problem. Crucial mistakes in theory and practice in terms of race come from basing the concept solely on the basis of discrimination against.

Invisibility of Whiteness

A fundamental error in Western research is to base the concept of race entirely on the view from above or how the West has viewed race. Alternate understandings of the concept

are silenced and race is abandoned as an analytic and practical organising tool. Considering the thorough and numerous critiques of Eurocentrism by various postcolonial and critical scholars (Gran, 1996; Lambropoulos, 1992; Said, 2003) this should perhaps come as no surprise. Historically one of the foundational problems of knowledge produced in the West, is Eurocentrism and a colonial universality (Hall, 2007). In other words, because the West got it wrong on race, the concept *itself* must be the problem and not the Western interpretation. The Western understanding of race is certainly the dominant one, but that does not make it the only one. There are ways to see race that are progressive and necessary. I am particularly concerned with the concept of Blackness, which has a long history in the Black radical tradition of both explaining society and organising to change it (Campbell, 1997). Critiques of Eurocentrism go deeper than simply highlighting missing research agendas and needing to include voices from the margins (Harris, 1993). The advent of critical Whiteness studies has attempted to show how Whiteness/Eurocentrism is at the core of all understandings and knowledge produced in and by the West (Gillborn, 2008; Henry, 2007)

An extensive examination of the importance of the concept of Whiteness was undertaken in Chapter One. It is here necessary to state how the invisibility of Whiteness is central to the denial of race in both the Marxist and liberal arguments. From a Black radical perspective, it is the invisibility of Whiteness that is the major flaw in both theory and practice. For Marx the fulcrum of communism could only be located in Europe and he identified his hero as the working class White male (Robinson, 1983). As his theory is largely based on exploitation it is, almost, inexplicable that Marx chose to largely ignore the most exploited people of his era, enslaved Africans, and those in the dark skinned parts of the world. Eurocentrism, or Whiteness, blinded Marx, and subsequent Marxists, to the reality that the Western industrial worker has *never* suffered the worst exploitation in a capitalist economy, but has benefited from the rewards of colonialism, with the entire infrastructure of

the West founded upon the labour and resources of the "the Rest" (Robinson, 1992). The irony with the "death of class" being declared (Pakulski & Waters, 1996) is that Marxists theory in relation to production and revolution are still plausible, but only if we locate the potential for uprising in the developing worldd, where the conditions of exploitation exist for a potential Proletarian revolt (Wallerstein, 2005). Within the West the chances of a revolution are slim because all within its confines benefit from the racial nature of capitalist exploitation (Waters, 2009). Marxist theory of global class unity can *only* succeed if we ignore the concept and benefits of Whiteness. I have firsthand experience of encountering this Marxist logic when, at a meeting in the Black community, a group of socialists were arguing that we needed to support the move for greater teachers pay in the UK and claimed solidarity with the Zimbabwean farmers seeking better working conditions in their homeland. It seemed to have escaped the socialists that the increased money they would receive in pay would be taken from taxing the wealth that is in part created by colonial trade practices that retard agricultural production in places like Zimbabwe. In other words one of the reasons the conditions are so bad for farmers in Zimbabwe is because of the wealth we extract in the West keeping them that way[13]. In the Marxist view, however, we are all exploited workers who need to unite.

Liberal conceptions of society have also been thoroughly critiqued for their Eurocentric outlook and knowledge (Peller, 1995). Enlightenment thought has been taken to task for excluding women and non-Europeans from society (Hall, 2007; Marshall & Witz, 2004). Positive sociology has also been severely critiqued as it arises out of the modernity project and is embedded in foundational authors such as Durkheim and Comte (Horowitz, 2004). Positivism, with its claims of objectivity and universality, has been challenged and provincialised as a Western perspective (Hwang, 2005; Mitchell, 2003). The fundamental

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[13] For a concrete example of colonial trade practices see Chapter One and the case of Ghana's rice production

problem with liberalism has always been that it views the West as the centre of the advancement of society. Liberalism has typically seen this as progressive and unproblematic, ignoring the reality that the gains of the West have been built on the wealth and labour stolen and coerced from the "Rest" (Hall, 2007). Far from being something that has subsided, the racial organisation of global society has remained and underwrites the success of the West. Racism is not and never has been at the margins of society, the concept lies at the core of the modernity (Bell, 1992).

Again we can see how Whiteness, and its invisibility, lie at the centre of the problems with liberalism. The notion of society progressing forward to Enlightenment can *only* have purchase if we ignore the racial hierarchy of opportunity in the world. The racial nature of "progress" may be altered with the presence of the dark-hued now in the West (see Chapter One), but it certainly the case that to be of the West is to be privileged (Hall, 2007). Acknowledging the scope and ramifications of Whiteness from a Black radical perspective belies the myths that lay at the heart of liberal society. Charitable aid to the Third World plays a key role in the self-image of the West as progressive and giving (Maren, 1997). However, if we accept that wealth in the West is generated partly from the exploitation of the "Rest", then we are only able to "give" money back to people in the Third World because we have benefited from their exploitation. This irony is lost under the invisible veil of Whiteness.

We must conceive of society in terms which do not place the West at the centre of explanation and understanding. The treatment of race is the perfect example of the danger in not doing so. Blackness, is a concept defined by and for those of African ancestry to understand society and mobilise toward freedom. Perhaps it is the very power and potential of this concept to rally people to achieve meaningful change, which best explains the academy's rejection of race, and therefore Blackness. What is certain is that academia has undermined Black radicalism, by questioning the validity of the movements existence. There

is perhaps no better example than the theoretical and practical misstep of "political blackness", in this regard.

Misstep of "political blackness"

"Political blackness"

"Political blackness" has been the dominant frame through which race has been viewed in British academia (Sudbury, 2001). Blackness is defined as a unifying term for all those in society who are victims of racism. All those who are not White, then, come under the term "politically black". The call of "political blackness" is a simple one that wants all the victims of racial discrimination to unite and fight against our oppression.

The central concept of non-White unity against oppression lying at the heart of "political blackness" in the UK is also a feature of anti-racist movements in other countries such as the US and particularly South Africa, where much of the inspiration for "political blackness" is drawn in my experience of discussion with colleagues. In the US the equivalent term is "people of colour", which has a long history of being used to unite people against racism in the country (Gillborn, 2008; Ladson-Billings, 2004). South Africa, and the fight against Apartheid is perhaps the best example of the power of the concept of "political blackness".

The horrors of the Apartheid system and the consequences of such a defined racial hierarchical system have been well documented (Tutu, 2000). Whites were marked out as superior to all others. There were numerous groups fighting against the system, including the Pan African Congress and South African Indian Congress; class based groups like the Communist Party; and tribal groupings like the Zulu Inkatha Freedom Party (Mandela, 1996). However, the group that eventually led South Africa out of Apartheid was the African National Congress, a multi-racial party that embraced principles similar to that of "political

blackness" in Britain. The power of uniting the different groups and bringing in sympathetic Whites was central to the victory of the ANC against Apartheid. In the South African case, even the more radical Black Consciousness Movement (BCM) of Steve Biko (2004/1978) embraced some form of "political blackness", being open to those categorised as Indians and Coloureds.

The pragmatism of uniting along lines of not being White was overwhelming in the case of South Africa, due to the nature of racial oppression in the country. However, we must understand the basis of that collectivity. Whilst "blackness" was the umbrella term used for cross racial unity, the term has different meaning in the African context than in the West because of the importance of Blackness.

Whilst Blackness is a concept through which the politics of the African Diaspora is lived as a necessity for Black people in the West, this is not always the case for those on the continent. The reality that in Africa people do not see themselves necessarily as Black, are often used, in discussions I have experienced, to delegitimise the idea of a politics of Blackness (as opposed to "political blackness"). The argument is a relatively simple one: if Blackness is not mobilised in the same way in Africa as in the Diaspora then it cannot be the basis of the global solidarity it seeks. In taking the ideas of the power of language too far we have given too much authority to language and in particular words. Simply because the word Black may not have the same meaning to those on the continent that does not mean the same concept does not exist in different locations.

In the case of South Africa we can see this with the mobilisation of the term African. Mandela (1996) is staunch supporter of the "politically black" position and frequently embraces the term and its ideological conclusions. However, Blackness as we understand it in the West is also a key concept to his politics but whilst Malcolm X would use Blackness, Mandela (1996: pp.110-11, *emphasis added*) refers to Africanism,

He [Lembede, a mentor] noted that wherever the African had been given the opportunity, he was capable of developing to the same extent as the white man, citing such *African* heroes as Marcus Garvey, W.E.B DuBois and Haile Selassie… He preached self-reliance and self-determination, and called his philosophy Africanism

When you are surrounded by Black people, Blackness in the physical marker sense is unlikely to be a salient distinction. So for Africans, the politics of Black independence we see in the West are done under the banner of Africaness or, Pan Africanism (Asante, 1996; Carmichael, 1971; Nantambu, 1998; Nkrumah, 1998/1963). Mandela does not even see a separation between the Black people on the continent and those outside, referring to one and all as Africans. Evidence of this connection can be found in the influence of Marcus Garvey on the Pan African movements on the continent. Garvey never saw African soil nor spoke any African languages yet his paper the *Negro World* was an inspiration to the Ghanaian, Kenyan and Tanzanian movements for independence (Nkrumah, 1998/1963). The concept of Blackness travelled, though the language used to understand and implement it was distinct. In the West, it is Blackness that must be mobilised, but Black radicalism is an extension of and inextricably linked to Pan-Africanism which is the face of the struggle on the continent of Africa. "Political blackness" delegitimises this progressive conception of Blackness. Further to this, "political blackness" also goes against one of the key founding principles of this progressive form of Blackness, which is to define ourselves in our own terms (Carmichael, 1971).

It should also be remembered that the coalition of "political blackness" in South African was based on the pragmatic alliance of separate groups acting together. The ANC, though multi-racial was founded and lead, in the main, by Black Africans and this was essential to its identity. Mandela (1996) recalls the fears that the ANC would be co-opted by

Whites, Indians or Coloureds. ANC started as an Africanist party and much of its legitimacy is taken from it being the voice of the Black majority. During the fight against Apartheid the ANC connected with the South African Indian Congress as well as the Coloured People's Congress and other groups to form the Congress Alliance to battle Apartheid, but these were separate groups coming together under a common goal.

It is understandable in the UK with large numbers of Black and brown people coming to the country and being rejected in numerous ways, that a pragmatic alliance would form in order to fight the barriers facing ethnic minorities in the country. We have seen this occur with cooperation between Black and Asian workers and groups such as the West Indian Standing Conference and the Indian Workers Association (Shukra, 1998). This history of cross ethnic groups collaborating should also not be underestimated or dismissed. It is not being argued here that there is anything wrong, in itself, with the alliance of ethnic minority groups to fight racial oppression, in fact quite the opposite. Using *blackness* as the vehicle for this unity is a misstep for a number of important reasons.

Blackness is political

What "political blackness" fails to see, or chooses to ignore, is that Blackness was at its conception political. Before the Black power movement we, people of African ancestry, were referred to as Negro, Coloured, Nigger, Nig Nog's etc. Following on from Marcus Garvey's pronouncement that the 'Black skin is not a badge of shame, but rather a glorious symbol of national greatness' (Cronon, 1969: pg.4), Malcolm (X 1971: pg.91) declared,

> There is a new type of Negro on the scene. This type doesn't call himself a Negro. He calls *himself* a Black man. He doesn't make any apology for his Black skin. (emphasis added)

Blackness, the physical manifestation of African ancestry, the difference used to oppress and belittle us was taken on by Black people as our mantle of resistance. The physical appearance of Blackness connects us to each other and to the Diaspora. It is this embrace of Blackness which leads to the adoption of Afro and African as prefixes to our ethnicity. This embrace of Africa is a hugely significant psychological step for Black people in the West because of the legacy of enslavement in de-Africanising its removed descendants (Hutton & Murrel, 1998). Blackness is a vitally important concept for Black people in the West as it is the only thing we can unite around. Carmichael (1971) argues that unlike other minority groups who may have language or religion to rally behind Black people only have the physical marks of Africa, as the cultural and religious base has been stripped away. This is what makes the idea of "political blackness" so dangerous from the Black radical perspective: it undermines the core concept of the movement, i.e. Blackness rooted in African ancestry.

In contrast "political blackness" in hallmarked by *non-Whitism*, as it draws people together on the basis of not being White. Whiteness is placed in a normatively dominant position and naturalised by this view. Blackness becomes defined entirely in relation to Whiteness and all of the power in this equation is with the dominant, the normal, the White. In terms of theory and practice this is one of the most damaging things we can do as it defines not only ourselves in terms of Whiteness, but also confines the struggle for freedom in a framework created by the dominant. We become stuck in a reactive form of anti positions, where the terms of debate are set for us by the dominant. Non-Whitism is a continuation of 'race from above' view and as such presents serious limits to emancipatory theory and practice.

Perhaps the biggest theoretical mistake with "political blackness" is that it is based on a national analysis of both race and racism. Whilst there is mileage in a form of pragmatism that link the different migrant communities together, racism is not a national system but a global one. Discrimination in terms of national attitudes and policy is a manifestation of a global system of racism, which has been developing over the last four centuries. "Political blackness" relies on an entirely insular national view to fight racism leading to irrational conclusions in theory and practice.

In the UK, a good example is fighting inequality in education. From the viewpoint of "political blackness" non–Whites should unite to fight the discrimination they face in the system. However, when we look at the statistics in education Indians and Chinese students outperform Whites, whilst Pakistani, Bangladeshi, African and African Caribbean achieve significantly lower grades (DfCSF, 2005). On top of this African Caribbean students have consistently been significantly overrepresented in school exclusions (Parsons, 2009). There is simply no discrimination based on "political blackness" in UK schools. Racism is far more complicated than White attitudes to dark skinned people and is drawn from a wider global system of White imperialism (West, 2002). It is argued here that this national myopia is the main reason for our not moving to a fuller, more global understanding of racism, which can then be applied on the national scale.

In the US, how this national basis of analysis plays out can be seen in the definition of White Latinos as "people of colour". Irrespective of the reality that many Latinos from countries such as Ecuador, Argentina, Brazil and to some extent Puerto Rico, are from nations where White supremacy is a significant feature of life (Dulitzky, 2005), when they cross the imagined border into the United States, they cease to be White and become "people of colour". It has recently been suggested that by 2042 the population of United States will be

majority minority (Penny, 2008). This fails to address the issue of White Latinos and the process of becoming White that was central to the forming of the nation. Ignatiev (1995) outlines the way in which the Irish became White and incorporated in the American mainstream. Whiteness is not something guaranteed by birth into a hueless skin. Rather Whiteness is the acceptance and reproduction of the superiority of the Western (European) tradition (West, 2002). Surely it is not inconceivable that the White Latino population will become absorbed into Whiteness in successive generations. Randolph (2008) suggests that the discourse around White Latino educational and societal progress mirrors that of the hardworking immigrant narrative of the European migration early in the 20th century. This is set in stark contrast to the discourse around African American innate failure. The argument here is simple: racism works in ways that are too complex to draw national boundaries around analysis.

Considering that mass migration to Britain is relatively recent it seems strange to define "blackness" so insularly. From my own experience, I first encountered the idea of "political blackness" on a course in my second year at university, though Blackness has been an extremely important concept growing up for me, as it has been for many other Black youth in Britain (Nazroo & Karlsen, 2002). Far from drawing notions of Blackness from encounters with White society, Black cultural and political forms have been based as much on experiences and developments in Britain as influenced by events, ideas, and culture from the Caribbean, America and Africa (Gilroy, 1987, 2002; Henry, 2006; Walvin, 2000). This interchange of ideas, politics and culture is essential in understanding Blackness, which knows no national borders.

Black US/Black UK

There may be a commonsense view that those of African descent and those of Asian descent in Britain have common cause and unity in the fight against racism, simply because of proximity to each other. However, it is here argued that Black Caribbean people in Britain face a fight against racism that has more in common with Black Americans in northern cities in the United States than with Asians living in the same neighbourhood.

Underlying the history of Black people in the West is the original sin of enslavement. It can be argued that the slave experience of Black people in United States is markedly different to those in the UK, as plantation enslavement never actually took place in Britain, and that the former enslaved population in the UK are (mostly) economic migrants from the Caribbean and not forced onto British soil by enslavement (Fryer, 1984). This argument, again falls into the trap of nationalising the argument: Britain never had plantations and Black people were never economic migrants to the United States. What is obscured here is the similarity of the process of migration from the slaveholding South to the free North, and the Caribbean to enlightened Britain. What is often lost when theorising about America is the sheer size of the country and the significance of the internal migration of Black Americans from the South to the North.

The size of the country also shielded much of the North from the realities of enslavement, but more importantly from the associated guilt. Enslavement in America is very much seen as a Southern phenomena (Joseph, 2008). It was the South that had the plantations and the North that fought for the freedom of Black people. This story is essential to the American Dream and the liberal belief in a progressive society. In a very real way Northerners take responsibility for ending enslavement, but not enslavement itself. For an example of this see none other than the romanticism surrounding New York, as the emblem of freedom. The same New York that was founded by one of the most vicious corporations in

history, the Dutch West India Company, and originally built by slave labour (McManus, 1966). British notions of freedom and progressivism are also built on myths surrounding the slave trade. Research into the representation of the bicentennial of the abolition of the British slave trade found how the discourse of the 'celebrations' in newspapers was framed on how Britain and Wilberforce ended 'West Indian enslavement' (Harris et al., 2007). Britain was actively engaged in only the ending of and not participation in enslavement, because the plantations were outside of her borders. This 'Wilberfarce' (Harris et al., 2007) is similar to the role of saviour afforded to Abraham Lincoln in the United States. Largely ignored is the role which British cities played in the slave trade, Liverpool and Bristol in particular, having been built almost entirely off the back of enslavement (Scobie, 1972). What is clearly set up on both sides of the Atlantic is an enlightened part of society that ended enslavement and embraced Black people, which lies at the heart of the liberal myth of progressivism in both.

Black people in both America and the Caribbean found themselves in a post-enslavement society where they remained at the bottom. Both groups had little choice with unemployment but to migrate to the urban centres of their respective saviours, albeit at different times. When they arrived in these progressive places they encountered the same forms of racism. It is not simply that both groups were filtered into the lowest strata of society, as happens with most economic migrant groups, it is the *nature* of their confinement and the basis of the discrimination they faced. Racism functions by creating a hierarchy and Black people worldwide fall into the same place on this hierarchy, at the bottom (West, 2001). It is this caste system which reproduces the stereotypes upon with discrimination in society is based upon. For Black Caribbeans in the UK and Black Americans in northern cities the stereotype of the aggressive, over sexualised savage that was key to enslavement formed the basis of the relations between ourselves and the mainstream population. It should come as no surprise then that in terms of discrimination the experience of Black Caribbeans

and Black Americans (regardless of which part of the country) are mirror images. Education is very good example of this where both groups are associated with lower educational attainment (NCES, 2003; Steven, 2007). If we look at more closely at schooling the arguments about hidden curriculum, devaluation of Black cultural forms, treatment of Black language and teacher expectations equally apply to both settings (Carby, 1983; Carter, 2003; Figueroa, 1991). The *nature* of the racism along with the *formation* of racial characterisations facing Black Caribbeans in the UK and Black Americans are the same. We have to go beyond a national analysis to not be blinded to this fundamental point.

A point should be made here that though this example refers to Black people of Caribbean descent and the legacy of enslavement, this argument does not exclude those of African descent in the Britain. The key argument being made is that White characterisations of Black people are dominated by the master/slave relationship, on both sides of the Atlantic. African immigrants do not share the narrative of the enslaved, yet they are filtered into society through the framework developed through interactions with and history of Caribbean migrants. So whilst there may have been positive differences in terms of Africans being seen as a model minority (Gillborn, 2008) we could well be witnessing a conversion of African and African Caribbean into Black British in terms of oppression and culture. In the field of education, in the 1990s African students tended to outperform Caribbean's significantly, more recently we have witnessed a convergence of educational attainment between the two groups, with Africans trending downwards (DfES, 2007). More important than the convergence of inequalities is the birth development of a Black British culture that includes Africans. In the past there had been noted tension between and conflicts based on the Africa/Caribbean divide (Sudbury, 2001). However, there is evidence to suggest that successive generations have merged to create a distinctive Black British cultural form outside of the continental distinctions (Henry, 2006).

Global revolution

Homogenising under the umbrella of "political blackness" collapses the interests of all ethnic minority groups, when this is not necessarily the case. Tension exists between different minority communities as well as with Whites. The 2005 riots in Lozells evidence this, which was a case of Asian and Caribbean communities clashing (Cole, 2005). This crisis point had been boiling over the years, and the location of the ignition being an Asian owned Black hair care shop should come as no surprise. Asians dominate the Black hair product market locally and this has been a source of frustration in the Caribbean community for years (John, 2005). Feelings of exploitation are not solely reserved for Whites. We can see similar tensions between Black and Korean communities in the United States (Cheung & Espiritu, 1989). We cannot assume that the interest of all minority groups are the same and must have conceptions of unity which recognise this. Rather than focusing on a national level, Black radicalism has a global reach which can provide a much better footing for unity across minority groups on the local level. Malcolm X (1964) wanted to elevate the civil rights struggle to an international arena declaring,

> We need to expand the civil-rights struggle to a higher level—to the level of human rights. Whenever you are in a civil-rights struggle, whether you know it or not, you are confining yourself to the jurisdiction of Uncle Sam...All of our African brothers and our Asian brothers and our Latin-American brothers cannot open their mouths and interfere in the domestic affairs of the United States. And as long as it's civil rights, this comes under the jurisdiction of Uncle Sam.

At the same time as uniting with oppressed peoples in Asia and Latin America, Malcom X is engaged in Black radicalism. Malcolm X lies at the foundation of Black radical thought,

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arguing that Black people should control the politics and economics of the Black community. Blackness is the lens through which Malcolm X views the world. Malcolm is the continuation of a historical position which places race, in the form of Blackness, at the centre for a movement for social change. What makes the quote above significant is that it ties a Black radical position into global a movement against Western imperialism, by elevating the struggle of Blacks in America to the level of human rights. It is therefore Blackness that ties him into a global movement against oppression and for the extension of the full rights of human beings to all peoples. Blackness, then, can serve as an important concept in theorising of and mobilising towards social change for all across the globe. Black radical commitments force particular understandings of oppression throughout the world. Far from closing off avenues for collectivity, they are opened.

Reification of Black/White dualism

The national analysis at the basis of "political blackness" homogenises dark skinned people and reifies the Black/White Dualism, which has dominated research on race and racism. As previously argued race and racism are far more complex than White/non-White distinctions, but the reification of the Black/White dualism is important for two other reasons.

Firstly, there is the critique from Asian scholars, most notably Modood (1996) who argues that the category of "politically black" submerges British Asians. Not only do we see this in the differential inequalities between minorities, but also importantly in the politics of mobilisation. One of the major limitations of "political blackness" is that it was one of the major successes of the Black power movement to inscribe Blackness as the definition of people of African descent in the West. When we use Black or even "black" we are typically referring to those of African descent. Asians are very unlikely to relate to "black" as a form of identity (Modood, 1996). An example of how this is manifested in practice is Black

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History Month celebrations in the UK. Supposedly the event is officially defined on the "politically black" definition, however in practice Blackness is played out in the culture and history of the African Diaspora. By including everyone in this celebration of so-called Black History, what happens is other groups get left behind and stuck in the Black/White dualism, with its deeply set categories of African and European

Secondly, this reification leads to a furthering of the critique that Blackness is too rigid to be useful. The postmodern critique of race, and Blackness, is that the concept is to essentialist and fixed to have use in the current times of flux and hybridity (St Louis, 2002). Race is seen as an outworn concept, based on modernist ideals and principles for some postmodern authors (Gilroy 1998). "Political blackness" solidifies this argument against race, based as it is on a liberal understanding of race from above and the homogenising of diverse groups.

Critique of postmodern position on race

Postmodern identity

Postmodern theory on identity challenges the modernist view of a fixed and stable object of the person (Burkitt, 1991). If the modernist object of the personality was marked by stability then the postmodern subject is hallmarked by fracture. Uncertainty is the calling card of postmodern thought. As society has developed, it has grown too complex for the rigid old style classifications (Berger, 1995). Postmodern identity theorists in general view not a cohesive, coherent, unitary self, but rather a decentred subject composed of multiple selves (Burkitt, 1991). Postmodern theory sees itself as a break from the certainty and structures of modernist thought, and the site of the decentred subject is key to its challenge to modernist, structural sociology (Burkitt, 1991) In terms of Blackness as an identity, postmodern theory works to undermine the concept as a redemptive tool for progressing society for three main

and very connected reasons. The first being a misreading of Blackness as too rigid and unchanging and the second that Blackness as an identity is too essentialist and therefore a block to individual humanity. The most fundamental critique of Blackness from a postmodern view is the labelling of race as a social construct that should be constrained to scare quotes. This idea has crossover appeal and is consistently mobilised against the utility of Blackness (Alexander, 2002; Alexander & Alleyene 2002; Mallon, 2004).

Rigidity of Blackness

A postmodern society is marked by complexity (Cilliers, 2002). In the case of Blackness the concept is not seen as complex enough to deal with the development of understandings of identity. Hall (1992) argues that we have developed new ethnicities as society has changed and successive generations are born into the country, that need to be looked at and theorised. A key term in this argument is 'hybridity', Black is seen as far too simple and reductionist in the face of the hybrid ethnic forms that have developed. This is part of a wider move away from racial categorisation towards ethnicity. Race is not seen as the basis of a real collective, because of its foundation in phenotypical difference, whereas ethnicity is bestowed with the tools for cohesivity due to shared culture, perhaps religion and language, to bind people together (Jenkins, 2005). In the British context I would again argue that this move away from Blackness in particular is due to the prevalent definition of "political blackness" in academia. As argued above the category "politically black" is far too reductionist, especially in the arena of identity. So postmodern positions on difference then draw out the hybrid forms of identification and are particularly interested in the way in which different individuals draw on and frame their various selves (Berger, 1995). Blackness is too rigid and modernist, then, to understand individual hybridist forms of identity.

What this position misses is that though Black is used for a number of widely diverse range of people it is also flexible and changing. Black is an umbrella term for people of African descent worldwide, however it allows for much diversity within its categories. Blackness and Africanness are almost interchangeable for this purpose, as Blackness is our connection to our African heritage. Terms like African Caribbean, African American, Afro-Cuban etc. are widely accepted, so it should not be too difficult to substitute the African prefix with Black. It is after all Blackness which marks out all of these groups. Gilroy (1987, 2002), chronicles the connection between Blacks in the Diaspora through musical forms. In the case of the former enslaved in the West he makes the case that the Black Atlantic is created out of and linked to, its shared past and cultural base that forms the undeniable connections through music today (Gilroy, 2002). If we look at Black music from Jazz to Reggae to Hip Hop, though they are all distinct they are very much all connected and drawn from one another. All are Black musical forms but they are articulated for different audiences. It is no different in terms of Black identifications when it comes to people. To embrace Blackness is not to say we are the same, and have always been the same, in some rigid unchanging way to connect us to each other, our history and future. What embracing Blackness means is that we acknowledge our Blackness and connection to it, and articulate it in any number of complex ways. Recent work on Black identity from the US by Marks et al (2004) sees Blackness as one part of multiple identity which can be more or less salient, and have a variety of different meanings, depending on the context. Hooks (1990) defines as 'postmodern Blackness' the identity that sees Blackness being central but fluid and open to complexity.

Blackness as essentialist

Closely linked to this notion of Blackness being too rigid and unchanging is the idea that the concept is too essentialist. Talking in terms of Blackness and Black unity, for some, presents the idea of some sort of natural connection to a Black essence for people across the Diaspora (Gilroy, 2002). This idea of a Black essence scares away even those scholars who mobilise the concept of Blackness such as Gilroy (1998, 2002) from fully embracing the politics of Blackness. Reducing people to their physical appearance is a dangerous step that can lead to justifications of racism. If we embrace a Black essence that is distinct from others accentuating the positive, how powerfully can we challenge those who embrace the idea of difference but use negatives? The fear of Blackness and therefore racial differences being inscribed as natural turns people away from the concept for understandable reasons. Justifications of racism have depended on the idea of natural, innate differences between the races, highlighted by the heyday of race "science" and the objective creation of biological differences proving Whites to be superior (Niro, 2003).

Postmodernism in general is a framework that highlights individual freedoms and complexity (Berger, 1995). The move from structural accounts to fluidity is one that steps away from group identifications and towards concentration on the individual (Pakulski & Waters, 1996). Restricting people to their groupings, and in particular based on skin colour, can be seen as damaging to human freedom and individuality (Burkitt, 1991). After being defined by and trapped in circumstances because of our physical appearance it should not be surprising that people want to go outside of the boundaries of their skin.

In response to accusations of essentialism in Blackness I would argue that they are predicated on a misunderstanding of the concept. As already argued Blackness is more diverse than is commonly thought, allowing space for varied formations. I would also argue that objections to the essentialism of Blackness are often based on Blackness as constructed

in cultural nationalism as opposed to Black radicalism. There is a strand of Black thought that places the salvation of Black people in the cultural return to a mythic conception of Africa, in this view Blackness, or Africaness is inscribed in dress, behaviour etc (Carmichael 1971; Newton, 1974; Ngozi-Brown, 1997). Black authenticity becomes about how we present ourselves and the need for homogeneity across the group. We can see these ideas also at play in the such phenomena as 'acting White', where Blackness becomes inscribed as performing an identity in particular way (Ogbu, 2004; Willie, 2003). In the progressive Black radicalism that forms the basis of this work, authenticity of Blackness is predicated on a commitment to a set of politics, not an affinity for a particular hairstyle (for a full discussion see Chapter Three). Blackness *is* essential to this radical position, in that it ties us into a commitment to a politics of action to improve the conditions of people in the Diaspora. The argument is not that this essential notion of Blackness is inevitable and lies inside all people of African ancestry, but rather it is a construction that is essential we as Black people embrace, if our goal is to transform society and improve the conditions we face.

Race as a "social construction"

Perhaps the most damage postmodern theory has done for a progressive Black radical politics is to constrain Blackness to the realm of the social construct, to the extent where it is commonly presented in its own set of "scare quotes" (Alexander, 2002). If race is a "social construction" then it cannot be the basis for collectivity and group action, runs the logic. Therefore we see the focus on complexity, hybridity and ethnicity.

It is not here argued that race is not a social construction. Certainly there is a hereditary foundation to the colour of the skin, but it is the meanings that we assign to this that are important, not the actually colouring itself. The changing and contested nature of Blackness has been well documented, (Mallon, 2004; Rodkin, 1993). At issue here is the

singling out of race as a social construct in order to delegitimize it. This is one of the more influential critiques from postmodern theory, as it crosses over into other forms of research to the point where "race is a social construct" has become canonical. The problem here is that of course the meanings of race are socially constructed but so are the meanings of *every* concept we have, including the standards of sociology: ethnicity, gender and nation. Blackness is absolutely no different than nation, for example, in this regard. The nation is formed and maintained by social action and interpretation. The understandings of nation are context dependent and in constant flux, with wide ranging diversity. Why therefore is "nation" not afforded the same scare quotes as race, and british given the authority of a capital B?

To answer this question we must return again invoke the concept of Whiteness and how it is rooted in liberal society. The liberal myth of a colourblind society has no room for Black radical collective identity and action, as it call attention to the endemic Whiteness of the mainstream. Postmodernism continues the view therefore of race from above as its paradigmatic predecessors. It is the social construction of the dominant that is the basis of the rejection of the concept of Blackness in postmodern thought. Similarly to the crossover appeal of Marxist racial formation, the "race is a social construction" discourse is adopted across academic paradigms to relegate race to scare quotes and Black people to a state of Black*less*ness. What we are left with is an over theorising of complexity and hybridity, which has reduced race to the 'difference that makes no difference' (Hall, 1993: pg. 361). So whilst the postmodern often appears as a critique of the dominant, in terms of Blackness it re-inscribes it in what Bell (1992 : pg.3) would define as a 'particularly perverse form'.

In terms of Black radicalism we must also keep in mind that, at the heart of the liberal project lies the exploitation of and dominion over the "Rest" by the West (West, 2002). As previously argued in the cases of Marxism and Liberalism, Whiteness in is all pervasive and limits Western theory. In undermining the basis for collective action based on progressive

conceptions of Blackness, postmodernism is no different in this regard. Singling out and delegitimising the power of race, also minimises a critique of Whiteness. Radical Blackness forces an examination of Whiteness at the structural root of society, and also presents a blueprint for overcoming the system of oppression.

Conclusion

Race has been prematurely abandoned by academia as a theoretical and practical tool. This has been the case for three main reasons. Firstly, defining the concept solely from "above" and ignoring alternative conceptions. Secondly, the misstep of "political blackness" that has confined the concept to national borders and reified the Black/White dualism. Thirdly, postmodern positions on identity highlight complexity, individuality and constructionism that race is seen as unable to deal with. These objections misrepresent and misunderstand the concept of Blackness that is central to a Black radical movement for social change.

Blackness is a historical and political concept that has developed over centuries and been used by the Diaspora to challenge the conditions of oppression (Campbell, 1997). The progressive Blackness at the heart of Black radicalism acknowledges the constructed nature of Blackness. It is not being argued that all Black people will by nature feel connected to a particular politics, rather that it is a choice that should be made because of the historical, present and future position of ourselves in relation to the Diaspora. Mandela (1996: pg. 698, emphasis added) sums this up when he argues that Black people are 'linked by nature, proud by *choice'*. Blackness can tie us into a redemptive politics drawn from our connections in the past and our situation in the present in order to create a progressive future, but it is our choice to make 'our commitment to the dead and unborn' (Newton 1974, pg.333). Malcolm X's

(1975) vision of Blackness connects the African Diaspora into global politics of rebellion that can ultimately lead to the guarantee of rights for all the citizens of the world,

> We declare our right on this earth... to be a human being, to be respected as a human being, to be given the rights of a human being in this society, on this earth, in this day, which we intend to bring into existence by any means necessary.

<u>Chapter Three</u>
<u>Authenticity</u>

Unity is not based on sameness, but on ideology and commitment to a politics

Amilcar Cabral[14]

Introduction

Black radicalism relies on uniting the community as Black people in order to transform society. Therefore, claims to Black authenticity are central to Black radicalism as it is the connection to Blackness that sustains the movement. This chapter will firstly discuss how authentic Blackness in Black radicalism has been based on a commitment to the Black masses and political mobilisation, drawing heavily on Malcolm X's (1971) distinction between the 'old and new Negro'. For Malcolm, in order for Black people to transcend the racism of society they needed to *become* Black and embrace their colour and collectivity. This embrace of Blackness has been the principle success of Black radicalism that has put in no doubt that 'Black is beautiful'. The second part of this chapter will examine how this major success of Black radicalism can become its principle failing. Becoming Black was meant to be a political statement tied to the politics of liberation. However, with the decline of Black radical politics and organisations Black authenticity has been retained but is increasingly defined in terms of cultural correctness rather than a commitment to a radical politics of the Diaspora. An examination of cultural nationalism, the emergence of identity "Nigga" and the cultural police of the Black elite will be analysed in this light. Finally, it will be argued that Tupac Shakur in his definition of a Thug Nigga offers a re-emergence of Black radical authenticity based on the Black masses and political mobilisation. From a Black radical position unity is essential around Blackness and it must be based not solely on culture, but rather a commitment to transforming society.

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[14] Cabral (1980: pg.43)

Black radical authenticity

House Negro vs. Field Negro

One of the most popular and powerful texts to arise from the Black radical movement is the *Autobiography of Malcolm X* (2001/1965), which exemplifies the narrative of *becoming* Black. The story starts with his upbringing, his descent into a life of crime and eventual imprisonment. It is whilst in prison that he begins to read, hears about the Nation of Islam and starts to think about the race problem in America. The more he learns the more he changes and he refers to the transformation in his thinking as 'like snow off a roof' (pg.170). This powerful metaphor represents what Cross calls the 'Negro to Black conversion' (1971). Exposure to racism leads to one thinking differently about society and beginning the process of becoming Black. In this view we are blinded by the racist nature of society but when we realise this we will arise and take action. Blackness is not simply afforded to anyone based on skin colour and heritage, it is a process of understanding oneself and society.

Malcolm X (1971) characterised this argument when he talked of the Negro revolution vs. the Black revolution. For Malcolm the Negro revolution was lead by civil rights leaders going cap in hand to the White power structure begging for equality. In contrast, the Black revolution was said to be an unstoppable force of the Black masses no longer willing to stand for racial injustice in society. Malcolm drew on his defined difference between two categories of the enslaved in plantation society: the House and the Field Negroes. The House Negro was depicted by Malcolm X (1971: pg.87) as playing up to the master, of not being prepared for the radical politics of Blackness,

> If the master's house caught on fire, the House Negro would fight harder to put the blaze out than the master would. If the master got sick, the House Negro would say, "What's the matter, boss, we sick?" We sick! He identified himself with his master more than his master

identified with himself. And if you came to the House Negro and said, "Let's run away, let's escape, let's separate," the House Negro would look at you and say, "Man, you crazy. What you mean, separate? Where is there a better house than this? Where can I wear better clothes than this? Where can I eat better food than this?" That was that House Negro. In those days he was called a "House Nigger." And that's what we call him today, because we've still got some House Niggers running around here.

Authenticity was bestowed on those with the right ideas, which were generated from the worldview of the Field Negro. In contrast to the House Negro, the Field Negro were the masses who hated the master, wanted to destroy the plantation and escape to freedom. For Malcolm X (1971: pg.88), then, to *become* Black is to identity with the Field Negro, or the Black masses, and want to separate from mainstream America,

> He [Field Negro] was intelligent. That House Negro loved his master. But that Field Negro -- remember, they were in the majority, and they hated the master. When the house caught on fire, he didn't try and put it out; that Field Negro prayed for a wind, for a breeze. When the master got sick, the Field Negro prayed that he'd die. If someone came to the Field Negro and said, "Let's separate, let's run," he didn't say "Where we going?" He'd say, "Any place is better than here." You've got Field Negroes in America today. I'm a Field Negro. The masses are the Field Negroes. When they see this man's house on fire, you don't hear these little Negroes talking about "our government is in trouble." They say, "*The* government is in trouble." Imagine a Negro: "Our government"! ... "Our Navy" -- that's a Negro that's out of his mind.

Distinctions between the house and Field Negroes are made on two grounds, firstly, that the House Negro was favoured by the master. They lived indoors, did less work and received better food. It was the Field Negro "catching hell" on the plantation and this framed their response to the master. The harsh treatment led to a rejection of the plantation system

and the master, drawing the second distinction between the two types of Negro, with the House Negro embracing slavery. For Malcolm the authentically Black position is that of the Field Negro because they are opposed to a system that is oppressing them. Whilst, the House Negro is better off compared to those in the field they are still oppressed by the system of slavery. In this view of plantation society the House Negro is being bought off, tricked into accepting their oppression by the master bestowing benefits to them that are restricted from the Field Negro. It is the classical strategy of divide and conquer. Were the master to treat all the enslaved equally harshly there would be constant revolt, so the House Negro is elevated into a buffer position between the master and the field. Malcolm argues that the House Negro becomes a peacemaker for the master and in a way an aspiration for the Field Negro.

Malcolm's claims of authenticity depend on a view of American society where the power relations from slavery remain largely unchanged. The Field/House Negro split on the plantation and the retrograde nature of the House Negro is clear and to some degree indisputable. By applying this metaphor to his contemporary America Malcolm is arguing that racism still runs deep to the core of society and oppresses all Black people. For Malcolm, the emergent middle class, who have some of the trappings of material success, are playing the role of the House Negro and deluding themselves into believing that the system can work for them. Therefore, they identify with and are protective of the mainstream (or master) and try to put a brake on the radical moves for freedom from the Black masses. This is said to be *in*authentically Black because it is action that maintains the racial oppression of all Blacks, but in particular condemns the Black masses to "catch hell". This idea is built upon by the more recent work of Critical Race Theorists such as Derek Bell (1992: pg.3),

Even the most successful of us are haunted by the plight of those less fortunate brethren who struggle for existence in what some social scientists call the "underclass". Burdened with life-long poverty and soul devastating despair, they live beyond the pale of the American Dream.

Bell explains how the 'underclass', those living at the bottom of society in the ghettos of America are the Black masses, or the modern day Field Negroes. The American Dream and the individual success afforded to some Blacks in society mask the wider structures of racism that condemn the Black masses to poverty and marginalisation. Individual success of the emergent Black middle class, the breaking of the glass ceiling, are not seen as signs of racial progress but rather as further condemnation of the Black masses. The equation from this view of society is that some "make it" *because* the rest do not. In the same way that during slavery the House Negro could only receive the benefits of being close to the master because of the labour and conditions of those in the field, in modern society the middle class Blacks can only 'succeed' because of the continued marginalisation and exploitation of the Black masses who remain in the ghetto. Importantly, if the relationship between the House and Field Negro from slavery is maintained then so is the analysis that sees this situation as oppressive for all Black people. The relative success of the Black middle class, and the trappings of material wealth, are viewed as masking the racist foundation upon which Western society is founded and sustained. Authenticity of Blackness can, then, not be separated from the radical politics of Black radicalism. The authentic Black people are those involved in bringing about the 'Black revolution', improving the conditions of all Black people by challenging the system of oppression.

Uncle Toms

The idea of the House Negro was, and remains, a powerful one in the Black community. Those Blacks who defended White America were often labelled House Niggers,

Sellouts or Uncle Toms (Kennedy, 2008). Uncle Tom became one of the worst insults that could be levelled towards a Black person. For instance, Dower (2008) explores how in the build up to Mohammed Ali and Joe Frazier's first fight in 1971 Ali, who was part of the Nation of Islam, accused Frazier of being an Uncle Tom, a puppet controlled by his White paymasters. This lead to a backlash against Frazier from the Black community across the United States that got so strong against Frazier that his kids were actually beaten up in school because they were the children of the Uncle Tom. However, Kennedy (2008) argues that accusation of 'Tomming" are made too frequently and without basis. Indeed, for Malcolm (1971) it is not simply any House Negro who takes the benefits from the master of better treatment that is deemed an Uncle Tom, but rather those who flaunt their position and attempt to convince the Field Negroes to accept their lot.

In the present day UK context a figure like Trevor Philips, the head of the Equalities and Human Rights commission, stands accused of being an Uncle Tom from some quarters. Philips has amongst other things been criticised for his declaration that 'multiculturalism is dead' and his acceptance of government policy that has been detrimental to the Black population, for example policing (Muir, 2009b). It is his position of influence that sets him up as an Uncle Tom, and his attempts to speak on behalf of the Black community. A perfect example of such criticism can be found in his debate with dub-poet Benjamin Zephaniah over the latter's rejection of an OBE, on the grounds that it would be an acceptance of colonialism. In a letter to Zephaniah in the *Evening Standard* in 2003 Philips argues that the poet's stance was not 'backed by the average black Briton' and presents his view (presumably shared by the Black majority) that Black people should cherish the honours handed out by the queen, and even goes on to offer an account of colonial history that 'wasn't all bad' (Zephaniah, 2003). What angers Zephaniah over Philip's remarks is that a Black person in such a position

of power would choose to spend time criticising a principled stance rather than tackling important issues. As Zephaniah (2003) replies,

> People keep telling me you are just a Blair babe and that you have sold out, and that you only care about your career, and that I should tell you're an uncle Tom, but I say no, 'he's not that bad'. Look Trevor, Instead of getting wound up about me staying true let me ask something of you and your position...Please have a meeting with my sister Joyce Springer, or one of my cousins... they want to talk to you about my dead cousin Michael Powell [died in police custody]. Stop writing those reports to justify your salary and go and listen to members of my family who are crying out for help from people like you.

Zephaniah had hoped for more from Philips, but sees him as ultimately intent on maintaining his position by acting as a representative of the Black population whilst at the same time keeping them in check.

Another prototypical Uncle Tom figure in the UK is that of Tony Sewell (who receives later criticism in Chapter Four). Sewell is a Black academic, who has written books, started programmes and made documentaries about the "underachievement" of African Caribbean boys. He achieves his status as an Uncle Tom through his various pronouncements damning the Black family and community for their deficient culture, which leads to their backwardness in schooling. Racism is not the problem for Sewell (2010), but ignorant Black men not caring for their children and in a *Guardian* article he wrote:

> We have wasted years, and lives, looking in the wrong direction as to the causes of crime and education failure. We've had endless studies attempting to prove institutional racism – while all along our boys' psychological needs weren't met (Sewell, 2010)

Such cultural explanations as these make Sewell and his ilk at worst a mouthpiece for the New Right and at best a salve to the consciousness of White liberals. To write in a national newspaper that racism does not exist and Black parents are to blame for their "failure" is to earn the charge, however ugly, of Uncle Tom. Politically it fits all the criteria that Malcolm X (1971) sets up in that he prospers from harming the cause of Black people by pandering to the views of the mainstream.

I am we

Central to any understanding of authenticity within Black radicalism is the idea of connection and responsibility to all Black people. Huey Newton (1974: pg.332) sums this idea up very well in his book *Revolutionary Suicide,*

> There is an old African saying, "I am we." If you met an African in ancient times and asked him who he was, he would reply, "I am we." This is revolutionary suicide: I, we, all us of are the one and the multitude.

The Rastafarian use of I-an-I is another example, where there is no distinction between the speaker and the listener; we are all one with each other and Jah (McFarlane, 1998). In the United States, the Black identity scales use as an indication of Black radicalism the amount who which someone believes their fate is tied into that of Black people as a whole (Cross, 1971, 1991; Sellers, 1998). "I am we" is a cornerstone of the Black radical argument. For the radicals, belonging and communality are central and it is the individual aspirations of the middle class Black that are seen to be holding us back. There are two problems with this argument, however.

Firstly, the "Negro revolution" is not necessarily any less concerned with the connection between Black people. Though Martin Luther King's legacy has been hijacked by

the New Right so effectively that he is now used to represent the anti-affirmative action side of the debate, it is clear from his life's work that he was not a post-racial figure (Dyson, 2000; King, 1969; Peller, 1995). In fact in the speech before he died King declared he had seen redemption for Black people in America and that 'that we *as a people* will get to the promised land' (1968, emphasis added). The idea of connection and responsibility towards Black people is not reserved for the radical Black position. The recent Obama phenomenon that swept across the Diaspora is an indication of this. There was little vocal opposition to Obama's presidential candidacy from the most conservative to the radical of opinion across all corners of the Diaspora. Obama truly endorses post-racialism, the American Dream (which is just that) and sees some sort of racial Utopia being in existence where there is 'not a Black America, not a White America, not a Latino America, but a United States of America' (2004). Considering this it seemed strange to see my father embrace his candidacy and my mother cry at his victory when both spent the best part of their lives involved in Black radical politics and providing the bedrock of the outlook that is presented here. My point is that the power of the Diasporic connection cuts across the Negro vs. Black line, both camps believe (to different degrees) in its importance.

It is easy to characterise the more mainstream moves for Black representation as individualistic compared to the selfless politics of the Black radicals who want freedom for all Black people. Different views of society are at work here, which does not necessarily mean the more mainstream Black position has any less regard for or connections to the Diaspora. One side believes that access to the system can change it for us all, whilst the other views the system itself as the problem no matter the colour of the people involved. The key point here is that connectedness and sense of belonging are not necessarily missing from the more mainstream Black political positions. This brings me to the second point, which relates to definitions of success.

Black radicalism has often, unsurprisingly given the House/Field split, taken a dim view of the success of the Black middle class. As outlined above success in the White world can be seen to be at the expense of the masses. Moving out of the neighbourhood, going to better schools and socialising in different circles, have all been seen as going against the interests of the people. Participating in "Babylon system" and accepting its corrupt rewards is not always seen as success (Kennedy, 2008). There exists for some a certain level of scepticism of professors, lawyers, doctors etc because of their position in mainstream society. Individual success is sometimes seen as coming at the expense of community success. However, there is a problem with this equation. If "I am we" is the case then surely the opposite is true, in that "we are I". By this I mean that more individual success should have a benefit to the community; the more mainstream success of the I the better for the we. This is an important note to make here because authenticity within the Black radical tradition is based on politics and not socio-economic position. It is not selling out or "tomming" to have a good career, live in a nice house outside the neighbourhood or even to have a White partner. Where authenticity comes in is whether or not the successes of the I are being used to benefit the we. Having a relatively privileged position in the social structure enables a person to donate money, use resources and skills they are fortunate enough to have acquired and also put time back in to the community. This is the test of authenticity from the Black radical standpoint: whether or not someone is involved in improving the conditions of Black people as a whole.

The ability to have success in the mainstream and use it for the good of all Black people shows that the comparison of the House Negro to the Black middle class does not fit perfectly. In a slave society the position of the House Negro would rarely have afforded them the chance to practically help their comrades in the Field, because of the strictures of bondage. Modern society has opened up enough, for at least the possibility, of the success in

the mainstream being used to benefit the masses. The slavery analysis is still, however, extremely powerful because though the shackles may have loosened the fundamental relationship of racism at the foundation of Western society is alive and well.

Up you mighty race

Slavery as a location is important for understanding the quest for Black authenticity in the West. We can see the dynamic of moving from the compliant, docile servant to the proud militant Black in the emergence of Rastafarianism in Jamaica. Campbell (1997) explains how during slavery an identity called Quashie arose. A Quashie was someone who understanding the rules of slave society played up the master of the plantation, acting subservient and pretending to be docile and ignorant. Campbell sees this docility as a form of resistance, because behind closed doors the Quashie would scheme against and use his pretence to trick the master. For him the Quashie figure of the trickster in Caribbean folklore, is embodied in such characters as Anansi the spider and Tacooma the rabbit. Other authors separate out Quashie from Anansi. Chevannes (1998) sees no positives in Quashie, which is used as an insult post-slavery to mean someone foolish. McFarlane (1998) explains how this foolishness stems from them being a dummy character who is unable to see their oppression. So the Quashie here is totally devoid of any sensibility or usefulness and distinct from the cunning trickster of Anansi. The suburbs of Jamaica are labelled Quashie-land by Rastafarians who are opposed to the Western dominance of the island, and see the identity and de-Africanised. Quashie, then, is similar to the portrayal of the House Negro in America, accepting of the system and happy to reap the benefits of being in a relatively privileged position. Anansi represents a form of resistance because of the cunning and fooling of the master.

Following the end of slavery and the despondency at the endemic poverty and broken promises of the post-slavery era, the figure of Quashie was ridiculed and the resistance of

Anansi became insufficient. The Black masses of Jamaica deserved and expected more, particularly in the rural areas, and a growing militant Black nationalism spread through Jamaica and the rest of the formerly enslaved colonies (Campbell, 1997).

Marcus Garvey (1967/1923) was the embodiment of this movement, with his cries for racial uplift. Kowtowing to Whites was no longer acceptable, Garvey advocated a movement based on the pride and resistance in Blackness itself. Gaveryism had a strong influence on poor rural Blacks in Jamaica and was a forerunner to the emergence of the Rastafarian movement (Lewis, 1998).

According to Campbell (1997) Rastafarianism arose in rural Jamaica, based on Garveyism and also Ethiopianism. The struggle for independence from Italian colonial rule, and the eventual victory by the Ethiopians was a source of pride and respect for Black people worldwide (Campbell, 1997; Nettleford 1998/1970). During the war in the nineteen thirties, South Africans and African Americans had to be stopped from going to Ethiopia and fighting on the side of the Ethiopians (Campbell, 1997). The source of such inspiration was the sight of a Black Emperor, Haile Sellassie, refusing to cede to the Europeans; in fact at his coronation British royalty was pictured bowing to his feet. This was the destruction of the Quashie image- a Black man able to stand up and be respected by Whites. Rastafarianism was built around Sellassie as the Black emperor, the leader of Black people worldwide (Ras Tafari, being the title and name of Sellassie before he became Emperor). The image of the Rasta was one based on defiance and pride, in keeping with Sellassie the self proclaimed "Lion of Judah". Campbell (1997) explains how the lion came to represent the Rasta, strong and proud, the antithesis of the Quashie. Rasta psychology is founded upon the idea of reclaiming Blackness and challenging the Eurocentric norms of society,

Rastafarian psychology involves expressions of self-confidence, affirmation of one's Blackness and personhood, a rejection of Eurocentric understandings of black people and their cultures, and a longing for liberation and ultimate redemption of the black peoples of the world (especially the oppressed)…Rasta psychology is, therefore, resistance and liberation psychology (Hutton & Murrel, 1998: pg.36)

Liberating the mind requires a cultural return to African forms for Rastafarians. The dreadlocks, taken from the appearance of the Mau Mau leaders, the ganja, the clothes and ital food are all opposed to the dominance of Western cultural forms in Jamaica, as an attempt to negate "Babylon system" (Edmonds, 1998). The Rastas were rebellious, and insisted on being *seen* to be rebellious. This an important point as it ties into coming of age of Black political resistance as cultural resistance that is perhaps the greatest legacy of the Black power movement.

Moves towards Black self-determination and self respect are an essential part of any progressive political movement of Black people because of the history of racism by the West, particularly on formerly enslaved populations. Slavery literally dehumanised Black people, not simply in terms of propaganda and stereotyping but in a material and systematic way, which has had long lasting consequences across the Diaspora (Williams, 1974; Wilson, 1994). 'Black is beautiful' is not simply a slogan, it is a powerful statement that attempts to heal the wounds inflicted by endemic racism. When Marcus Garvey proclaimed the 'Black skin is not a badge of shame but a glorious symbol of greatness' (Cronon: 1969: pg.4) this was a radical challenge to hundreds of years of oppression; an attempt to destroy the inferiority complex inherent to Black people from White racism. We forget how cultural symbols such as the Afro, which are now en vogue, were at the time strong political statements meant to undermine Western dominance. Imagine the symbolic power of the emergence of the Afro. My mother tells the story of how one day she was a typical Black

women at work, tying back her unruly hair, and then the next she walks in showing the full glory of her Africaness, hair unleashed and proud. An affirming, defiant Black culture is a statement of intent, a way to galvanise and mobilise people towards the fulfilment of freedom. However, it is when the second half of that sentence is missing that Black power and cultural politics can lose its way.

Black cultural authenticity

Cultural Nationalism

There is a danger that in espousing such ideas as the Negro to Black conversion (Cross, 1971) authenticity can become inscribed in cultural performance and not political production. Authentic Black people are no longer those involved in the struggle for freedom, but those who are identified as achieving cultural liberation. Dressing, talking and acting the right way can become seen to be liberatory in themselves and hallmarks of Black authenticity. From the outset of Black radicalism this difference has been recognised and also attempted to be avoided by much of the Black radical movement (Garvey, 1967/1923; Newton, 1974).

Carmichael (1971) argued that Black radicalism was focused on a political programme of Black liberation. Struggle was defined by mobilising people to achieve practical gains by unifying as Black people. For example, Black business coalitions or Black education programmes. This was seen to be in contrast to cultural nationalism, which was predicated on achieving freedom through taking our minds back to Africa. The focus of cultural nationalism was said to be in dressing the right way, speaking an African language and learning traditional rites. Missing from the programme of cultural nationalism was any political programme to achieve Black liberation. An example of cultural nationalism from the seventies is Ron Karenga's creation of Kwanzaa, a festival that takes place starting from

Boxing Day based around various principles from the African continent (Flores-Pena &
Evanchuk, 1997). Themes such as unity and freedom are the foundation of the festival and it
is meant to have the effect of bringing together the Black community in a spirit of Africaness.
The need for a culture of resistance in the West has already been expressed and for Black
Americans such cultural creations are perhaps more important than for other formerly
enslaved Africans.

Central to the dehumanisation of slavery was the removal of African cultures and
languages. This is a theme well covered in literature with books such as Alex Haley's *Roots*
(1976). Maintaining cultural connections to Africa in particular, represented issues peculiar to
Black people in the United States for two main reasons. Firstly, the turnover of Africans to
Caribbean countries such as Haiti and Jamaica was higher than in the United States (James,
2001/1938; Robinson, 1983). In both of these countries working enslaved Africans to death
was not uncommon and they frequently had to replace large numbers with "fresh" Africans.
This meant that the ties to Africa were stronger and more recent than in the United States. In
fact many of the rebellions, for instance the Maroons in Jamaica and the Haitian uprising, had
leaders who were born in Africa (Campbell, 1997; James 2001/1938). Secondly, in the
Caribbean post-slavery the countries were predominantly Black, even if still controlled by
Europeans. So the development of national culture, infused with African heritage was
possible, even if this was by no means straight forward (Nettleford, 1998/1970). A good
example being in Jamaica, with the growth of Rastafarianism, Reggae and Patois. Whilst the
development of African American culture has been no less rich, and includes music, religion,
food and language, these cultural forms have been derided by the mainstream (and within this
I include certain sections of the Black middle class) as being deficient (Hollins, 1996).
Accusations of having "no culture" that are levelled against African Americans are not
charged as quickly against Caribbeans because of the emergence of national cultures.

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Therefore the developments of cultural links to Africa were seen as vitally important by some in the US and efforts like Kwanzaa form part of that movement. Creating such cultural ties are not being criticised here.

What is criticised, however, is when this kind of cultural initiative is the sole work of a movement. Tying Kwanzaa into practical rebellion does not seem a concern for some, as celebrating Kwanzaa is taken to be resistance enough. As Nagueyalti (1999: pg.26) puts it,

> Kwanzaa might liberate the mind but it does little to eliminate economic and political oppression... Culture is crucial to revolution, but it is not revolution.

Perhaps one of the most frustrating, yet also telling, developments in Black politics is the rise of cultural nationalism. Gone are such groups as Black Panthers and dead such people as Malcolm X, whilst Karenga has achieved a rebirth in the form of Maulana and is a professor at California State University (Van Deburg, 1997). Cultural nationalism now appears to be *the* voice of Black radicalism.

Furthering his work on Rastafarianism Campbell (1997) notes the ascendency of cultural nationalist themes. Authors such as Nettleford (1998/1970) and Owens (1976) have highlighted the mysticism and religious sect-like qualities of Rastafari. Campbell (1997) argues against this characterisation, outlining how the movement had been originally based on resistance to imperialism and helping the Diaspora to achieve liberation. However, Campbell recognised a shift in Rastafarianism, with the doctrine becoming increasingly religious and more interested in maintaining cultural distinctions than being involved in liberatory politics. He explains how the Jamaican state was involved in strengthening the religious aspects of the Rastafari, by taking action such as officially recognising the Ethiopian Coptic Church. Campbell further argues that visions of Sellassie as a Christ like figure

emerge later on in Rastafarianism with this religious turn to the movement. Previously the reverence held towards Sellassie had been because of his role as the Emperor of the global Black nation.

Overall, across the Diaspora I would argue that there has been a drift towards cultural nationalist understandings of Blackness. Authenticity is in many ways defined by consumption and attitudes, rather than the politics of liberation. In the UK, as well as United States, this shift is exemplified in the popularisation of the use of the word Nigga.

Niggativity

Nigga is an important development to understanding the role of contemporary Black identity, particularly from the perspective of Black radicalism and the legacy of the movement. Far from being static Black identifications have developed and changed over the years (Martin, 1991). The shift to Nigga is captured by the Hip Hop artist Talib Kweli (1999) in his song *Four Women,*

She went from Nigger to Negro to Coloured to Black,

To Afro, to African American and right back to Nigga,

You figure,

She'd be bitter in her twilight,

But she alright cos she done seen the circle of life.

Nigga is an identity that some Black youth have come to embrace, which is typically associated with Hip Hop music and has also been commonly used in Britain (Quinn, 2000). Judy (1994), however, argues that use of the word Nigga, or Nigger, between Black people has a much longer history dating back to the days of enslavement. During enslavement it was the Bad Nigger that went against the rules and got beaten by the master. A Nigger became

someone who was resisting, tough and would take no nonsense from Whites or anyone else. Judy explains how the Bad Nigger did not fear anything, including death and because of this scared Whites and other Blacks in equal measure. The resistance of the Bad Nigger was not along the lines of organised rebellion to slavery, but based on a "rebel without a cause" outlook. In the post-enslavement world, the Bad Nigger became the crook/bandit, living outside the bounds of society. With the mass migration of Black people from the antebellum South to northern cities, the Bad Nigger took on special meaning in the ghettos. The Hustler, the Dealer, the Gangsta are all descendents of the Bad Nigger from the plantation.

The emergence of the Nigga identity, popularised by Gangsta Rap, should therefore come as no surprise. When NWA (Niggaz With Attitude) released their album *Straight Outta Compton* (1990) with such controversial tracks as *Fuck Da Police*, they were continuing a feature of the African American experience, that of the Bad Nigger. The decaying inner cities of Black America lend themselves to a certain degree of hopelessness (Upchurch, 1997). In Black America thousands of young men are murdered each year (Wilson, 1994), the poverty and unemployment rate is twice as high as elsewhere (Street, 2004) and there are almost one million Black men in prison (West & Sable, 2008). Images of hustling, drug dealing and pimping in Gangsta Rap are stories reflecting the reality of the situations many young Black people in America find themselves in. In the same way that the Bad Nigger was a reaction to slavery, Nigga is a tool for surviving the conditions of the ghetto. This is summed up by Cam, a student on a writing course at Columbia University,

> Cam writes that "Your average Nigga in the ghetto is given 5 words at birth...These 5 words" constitute the ghetto newborn's lifelong defense plan that is guaranteed to "get him or her through every problem they face. These 5 words are 'I don't give a fuck'" (Young, 2004: pg.697).

It should also be noted that the discussion of Nigga is highly masculine, as are much of the descriptions of identity in Black radicalism. One of the key criticisms of Black radicalism has been its masculinist history and leadership, with the Black Panther Party begin especially criticised for the role of women (Walker, 1993). The Black Panthers are perhaps most known for sexism because of Stokely Carmichael's pronouncement that the only place for women in the movement was 'prone' (Joseph, 2008). However, Elaine Brown (1994), a former leader of the party, explains how women took on leading roles in the party and directed policy in the later years. Though the public face of the Black Panthers may have been extremely masculinist, in reality women were a key part of the party (Bukhari-Alston, 1995). This trend is no different in Black radicalism in general with women playing a central and vital role (Crawford, 2009) but with men coming mostly to prominence (for evidence of this see the gendering of the references for this piece of work). Therefore, a discussion of Black identities and authenticity within Black radicalism is likely to fall into a discussion that is largely masculine. However, the concepts of house/field, tomming, and development of strong identities post-enslavement are no less relevant for women. In fact, the emergence of Nigga from enslavement can be seen as twinned to the development from Jezebel to Vixen for Black females (see Balaji (2008) and Ford (2009) for a full discussion).

Whilst Nigga as an identity is understandable and traceable to material conditions and the history of the African American experience, I would argue that it has taken on specially significant meaning in the face of the collapse of Black radical politics. Nigga stands out for Black radicalism because it is tied into the anti-authority stance and pride in Blackness of the movement. Black radical political mobilisation and demands[15] were dangerous and unacceptable to the state, because of their refusal to bow to the power system. The story of the campaign by the state to destroy the Black Panthers (hooks, 1990b; Shakur, 2001).

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[15] For example the 10-point Platform of the Black Panther Party (Seale, 1970).

Murdering Black Panthers was common practice by the police, along with planting counterrevolutionaries into the movement (Haas, 2009; Wendt, 2006). Such action was not limited to the seventies, with one of the most extreme cases of persecution taking place in Philadelphia in 1985, when the police dropped a bomb on the headquarters of a radical organisation called MOVE, actually within the city (Assefa & Wahrhaftig, 1990). In the face of such obliteration at all cost tactics the Black radical movement faced little chance of succeeding and gradually the politics of Black liberation eroded to the margins of society. However, the consciousness of Black America and across the Diaspora was altered forever and the feature of Black authenticity was retained. The authenticity of Black radicalism is the image of the lion, resistance and Black pride.

The age of Black cultural authenticity

Lacking the political organisations to facilitate feelings of Black pride and unity, a certain degree of cultural nationalism is all that remains. Being Black in some quarters is largely defined by performing Blackness (Willie, 2003). There are numerous ways to culturally perform Blackness and the discussion appears to have largely become about which cultural expression is better, or perhaps more about which is worse. Authenticity is key across the spectrum of different Black identifications. 'Nigga Authenticity' (Judy, 1994: pg.1) is important to understand because it has come under a lot of criticism.

What "keeping it real" involves for young Black people has been the basis of work in the United States on the concept of "acting Black" in school. Some have argued that Whiteness can be associated with academic achievement, whilst Blackness is drawn as being anti-authority and to an extent anti-school (Fordham & Ogbu, 1986; Ogbu, 2004). Accusations of "coconut" or "bounty bar" can be levelled at successful Black students who are seen to be "acting White", or "tomming" to use language from Black radicalism. Much of

the acting Black literature perhaps takes the case too far and locates the blame for anti-school attitudes directly at the door of the students, their families and communities. Carter (1993) argues that there are different cultural capitals necessary to succeed in school compared to living daily life in some Black urban communities. Non-dominant cultural capital is rejected by the school system and creates an immediate disadvantage for Black inner city youth. This discussion will be continued in Chapter Four, for the purposes of the present argument it is enough to say that a culture of Blackness has developed that is tied to the resistance and self-respect messages of Black radicalism. However, in the absence of political leadership and the experience of abject material conditions this identity has become intertwined with the worldview of the Bad Nigger. When there is little chance of uplift, and hope has for all intents and purposes been removed, embracing the Bad Nigger perspective becomes a tool for survival. Black self-worth can become based on opposing the authority of White society: the police, the teacher, or "Babylon system". This kind of opposition is a vibrant force that is necessary to confront structural racism, but without a political programme to focus the anger, it can quickly descend into a frustration being turned inwards instead of towards the problems of society.

Hip Hop has come under serious fire for promoting Nigga (Marriot, 1993; Nelson, 1998). To some extent the level of the criticism is unfair because Hip Hop artists simply do not have the control over young people's lives that some people are willing to accord them. If listening to rapper 50 Cent drove people to murder then surely we would have seen chaos in the White middle class neighbourhoods where most of his music is purchased. Some artists can come under fire, however, over the issue of minstrelsy. LaGroan (2000) has argued that the image of mainstream Rap promoting the hypersexualised Black subject, the violent, aggressive Black male are simply an updating of the minstrel show. Such music display a caricatured, stereotyped depiction of Blacks that the White mainstream want (or need) to

consume. However, these stereotyped images are far more dangerous than the minstrel shows of the past because they are not only being consumed by White audiences but also by Black people. The grotesquery of minstrels and Golliwogs (now sanitised into Gollys) were always perceived as offensive depictions by the Black community; nobody wanted to grow up to be Mr. Bojangles. In the age of Black cultural authenticity, however, these caricatured images of Blackness are fed back down to the youth who consume and incorporate them into their authentic concepts of Blackness. This is not something simply reserved for Gangsta Rap, it is a societal process that has incorporated Black musical expression. It is also not something that we can blame on artists such as 50 Cent. To sell millions of records in the United States you need to appeal to Whites, which means producing an image they want to consume. In many ways it is similar to the Quashie, having to shuck and jive to the master. However, instead of using this behaviour to trick the master, we internalise the shucking and jiving as authentic resistance. When Niggativity is produced in such a way it can only be conducive to the continued oppression of Black people in society.

The Bad Nigger was never a threat to the slave system because they were ultimately resigned to it. Their anger and frustration was forceful but used to make the best of the situation for themselves. In a slave society the Bad Nigger is dangerous because they are liable to do anything, including killing the master, and are also unprofitable because they will not be productive and may just run off. However, in the modern day we have a situation where the Bad Nigger has in many ways become the Good Nigga. Whilst the fear of the Black threat looms large over society the criminality of the Good Nigga is largely confined to the Black inner city. Instead of turning our outrage at the racism in society we turn in on ourselves and are literally killing each other. Not only does the image of the ghettoised Black play a psychological role in boosting White self-esteem and superiority (Wilson, 1994), but it is also justifies the criminalisation of the Black community for the benefit of mainstream

society. Angela Davis (1998) outlines the prison industry complex whereby penitentiaries have become profit making industries. The Black and poor are funnelled in and forced to work for less than those in sweat shops abroad. It is no coincidence that Black people provide over 40 percent of the labour for this industry of almost two million "workers" (West & Sable, 2008). In the UK prison itself does not play such an important economic role, but the overrepresentation of Black people is actually worse when compared to our numbers in the general population (ONS, 2002). Criminality in general, and Black criminality in particular, is job creation. Think of the police officers, prison guards, lawyers, probation officers, media etc that would be unemployed were it not for crime. So the Good Nigga has a role in mainstream society that keeps Black people from advancing. Now, this is not to blame rappers for the ills in the community. They did not create the problem but are merely fortunate enough to profit from it. However, images and messages that are reproduced within some rap music provide a certain legitimacy to a vision of Niggadom which can only bring heartache to the community. It appears as though some rappers have chosen to "pimp" Uncle Tom's Cabin and take up residence.

Gangsta rappers as Uncle Toms do not fit conceptions of the classical Uncle Tom figure being the middle class sell-out who talks, thinks and acts "White" (Richardson, 2007). With doctorates and attendant middle class airs it is easy to paint the likes of Tony Sewell and Trevor Philips as Uncle Toms, however, we must be clear that it is not a cultural position but a political one. This is an important note because the cultural view of "tomming" shields rappers like 50 because of their presumed cultural authenticity. It is not 50's Blackness that is questioned by commentators, but his good sense an morals. However, if we take a political and not cultural definition of "tomming" then we must include 50 Cent, with Sewell and Phillips. We would not normally think of three as connected but if we look through the lens

of Black radical political accountability we cannot help but assign them all a place in the Cabin.

Afristocracy and cultural authenticity

Criticism of Nigga and Hip Hop from within the Black community have come most strongly from what Dyson (2005) dubs the 'Afristocracy', or the Black elite. Bill Cosby became spokesperson in chief for the Afristocracy in 2004 when he gave a speech at a National Association for the Advancement of Coloured People celebrating 50 years since the desegregation of schools in America. In part of his speech he proclaimed,

> Ladies and gentlemen, the lower economic and lower middle economic people are not holding their end in this deal. In the neighborhood that most of us grew up in, parenting is not going on... We've got to go in there. Just forget telling your child to go to the Peace Corps. It's right around the corner. It's standing on the corner. It can't speak English. It doesn't want to speak English. I can't even talk the way these people talk: "Why you ain't where you is go ra?" I don't know who these people are. And I blamed the kid until I heard the mother talk. Then I heard the father talk. This is all in the house. You used to talk a certain way on the corner and you got into the house and switched to English. Everybody knows it's important to speak English except these knuckleheads. You can't land a plane with, "Why you ain't…" You can't be a doctor with that kind of crap coming out of your mouth.

Cosby's vehemence is directed not at racism in society but at the Black people atthe the bottom who are disgracing themselves and their people. In this argument what is holding us back in society is ourselves, our negative thoughts and presentation (Cosby & Puissant, 2007; Dyson, 2005).

We are no stranger to such a *Blacklash* against Black youth culture in the United Kingdom. Dizzee Rascal's appearance on Newsnight talking about Barack Obama's victory in the US presidential election is a good example. Dizzee Rascal, a British Hip Hop artist, dressed, spoke and acted like many other young Black people in inner city London. He made come compelling arguments about Obama's victory and politics in general but after his appearance was savaged by the Black middle class for being 'embarrassing' (Pidd, 2008). There has been a tendency for some in the Black community, across the Diaspora, to want to censor images of Black people to White society, not wanting to "air our dirty laundry", so to speak. Arguments such as these share much in common with the politics of cultural nationalism.

Authenticity for cultural nationalists is to be found in portraying the correct culture of Blackness. This is no different for the cultural police of the Afristocracy. Presenting ourselves correctly is deemed the way to move forward. Talking, dressing and behaving correctly will see us succeed in life; the authentic Black here is the polished Black. This authenticity relies on a different politics to cultural nationalism, that of mainstream acceptance as opposed to a rejection of White society. However, they function in similar ways. The structural ills of society are not addressed as all energies go into castigating those who do not have the appropriate culture. Both sides also take an extremely dim view of Niggativity, seeing it as holding back the advancement of Black people. However, when we examine the vitriol with which these pronouncements of ethical accountability are being made we can quickly see that there is little positive about them. In the Cosby previous quote he talks of 'these people' and speaks of the people in the ghetto as objects, referring to them as 'it'. The language, dress and lifestyle is demonised and condemned, with no recognition that where negative cultures exist they are products of the conditions from where they arise. To listen to Cosby it is almost as if there is an innate savagery in the Black poor that we need

to sweep away. Any politics that demonises the most marginalised section of a community can never hope to be redemptive.

Some would argue that we need to abandon calling ourselves Nigga, or even Black, because of negative connotations. By embracing positive identifications and images of ourselves we will bring about a change in the community, so the logic goes. This idea in itself is not negative as there is nothing wrong with positive thinking. However, if today all Black people dropped everything else and starting referring to each other as Africans, or Brother and Sister, Sir and Madam, we would still wake up tomorrow at the bottom of society. The problems that we face as Black people are not in our *minds*, they are in our streets, in the schools and with the police. We cannot simply wish them away with positive thoughts of Africa or ourselves.

Definition of a Thug Nigga

Far from simply focusing on the obvious negatives of different identifications, then, we need to examine the substance of them. Visions of Niggativity have been presented in a positive light, with Judy (1994: pg.211) proclaiming 'the end of Black folk and the beginning of global Niggadom'. A Hip Hop artist who presents Niggativity as transcendent is Tupac Shakur. One of his most famous mantras is that of THUG LIFE, words that he had inked across his stomach, standing for The Hate U Gave L'il Infants Fucks Everyone (Holland, 2000). Thug Life was said to represent the mentality of young Black men on the street in order to survive the harsh realities of living in a racist society (Dyson, 2006). Tupac was attempting to reach out to the most marginalised and demonised segment of the Black community: the Bad Nigger. Clearly here the Bag Nigger, or the Thug is a creation of White society, the logical conclusion of continued racial oppression of Black people in America. As Shakur explains 'I didn't create Thug Life, I diagnosed it' (1995). The reality of the situation

for Blacks in the ghettos of America created the Thug, the Bad Nigger. This was not something that could just be wished away with dreams of Africa or being positive African Americans. In an extremely passionate speech Shakur (1993) rails against the idea that Black people can think their way out of the ills of America's racist society,

> I don't care if you're a lawyer, if you're a man, if you're an African American, if you're whatever the fuck you think you are. We're thugs and Niggas to these motherfuckers. And until we own some shit Ima call like it is. How you gonna be a man if you're starving? You know? You could go to four or five different houses and they're ain't a man in any one of those motherfuckers. How we gonna be African Americans if we out here dying? We're Thugs and we're Niggas until we set this shit straight.

Shakur is arguing that no matter what we refer to ourselves as, it is the material conditions that we find ourselves in that are important. Black people are at the bottom of society, have been at the bottom of society since our "arrival" and we need to recognise this and use it to the advantage of the community. Shakur did not want to get rid of the Thug, to replace him with a more acceptable vision of an African American. Instead he saw the Thug as a force for positively changing the situation of Black people in America. Golus (2007) explains how Shakur even went as far as to draw up a code of Thug Life that he was able to get members of two fiercely rival gangs, the Bloods and the Crips, to sign up to at a rally in California in 1992. It was accepted that dealing drugs (slinging) and gangbanging would happen, but the idea was to bring in a code to reduce the harm as much as possible. For example, Joseph (2006: pg.41) details the code that includes rules such as 'slinging to children is against the code', 'having children sling is against the code' and 'no slinging to pregnant sisters. That's baby killing! That's genocide'. Shakur was trying to harness the destructive power of the Bad Nigger, and to use it positively by talking to and identifying with them. Instead of trying to

ban the word Nigga, he tried to make it positive, using it as an acronym for Never Ignorant Getting Goals Accomplished (Dyson, 2006). What he was attempting to do was to include the previously marginalised, those excluded even by the Black community. Niggativity for Shakur, then, was something to be embraced, as it was the reality for many and he wanted to use it to transform society.

Shakur's approach was not heralded by all sections of the Black community and he remains a controversial figure for some because of the content of his lyrics, which are often seen as violent and misogynistic. As an artist Tupac wrote many lyrics representing life as he saw it and certainly at times demanded women, however he also penned some classic uplifting tracks such as 'Benda's Got a Baby' and 'Keep Ya Head Up'. The positive messages were ignored by some and there was a campaign against Tupac's recordings led by civil rights activist Delores Tucker who actually attempted to sue Tupac after his death and have his records banned (Morisson & Dangerfield, 2007). Delores Tucker's assault is in keeping with the backlash against Nigga and Hip Hop in general by the Afristocracy, who police the boundaries of acceptability of Black expression. The absurdity of many of these stances is demonstrated by Delores Tucker's case against Tupac for him referring to her in his songs. One of the songs she complained about was a very positive track entitled 'Wonda Why They Call U' (Shakur, 1996). The song was a response to Tucker's complaints about him using the word "bitch" so often and tells the tale of a woman growing up sleeping with people for money, catching HIV and then dying. The moral of the song is clear from lines such as,

Keep your mind on your money, enroll in school.

And as the years pass by you can show them fools.

But you ain't tryin' to hear me cuz your stuck,

you're headin' for the bathroom 'bout to get tossed up.

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Still lookin' for a rich man, you dug a ditch,

got your legs up tryin' to get rich.

I love you like a sista but you need to switch

and that's why they called you bitch, I betcha.

All of the positivity in the song is ignored because of the fixation on language and presentational style. The cultural forms of the Black poor is demonised at the expense of engaging with the challenging ideas being represented. For the Afristocracy, it is not what you say but *how* you say it.

Shakur's vision of the Thug closely resembles the Black authenticity that lies at the heart of Black radicalism. He is reaching out to the Black masses to appeal to what Malcolm X would call the "new Negro" in order to use their defiance, strength and refusal to back down to attempt to change the conditions of Black people for the better, or to 'set this shit straight' (Tupac, 1993).

Conclusion

Black radicalism has had a lasting impact by reversing the dehumanisation of Blackness and restoring pride in embracing being Black. This is no small achievement given the history of enslavement and colonialism. However, there is a danger that we become too concerned with the cultural performance of Blackness and lose the message of political authenticity that is found in the commitment to a politics of Blackness. In this chapter the limits of cultural nationalism and the myopia of the Afristocracy have been discussed in this regard. An extensive examination of Nigga was undertaken, on the one hand to explore how the development of Black identities in relation to cultural authenticity and on the other, to present an argument for the importance of the substance and politics of an identity over its

cultural acceptability. Regardless of how uncomfortable or how negatively we view the use of some words, Tupac's vision of a Thug Nigga is surely preferable to Bill Cosby's African American, because it is tied into making the situation for Black people better. In the vein of Malcolm's Black Revolution, Tupac's Thug Nigga is drawn from diagnosing a radical conception of society and prescribing solutions drawn from the community. His argument is relatively simple: the system is failing Black people and we need to come together as Thugs, Blacks, African Americans, or whatever other label we would like to use to transform society. On authenticity, this is the message of Black radicalism.

Chapter Four

A Black Radical Independent Education

This word separation has been misused...a better word than separation is independence

Malcolm X[16]

Introduction

So far an outline of Black radicalism has been presented along with a defence of the criticism levelled at the position by the academy. It has also been attempted to discuss the main challenge of Black radicalism, that of authenticity and present the solution to the problem by defining authentic Blackness, in a radical sense, in politics and a commitment to action. The present chapter will outline how this Black radical position can be articulated in Black communities with specific reference to the field of education. The purpose of this thesis is to argue that Black radicalism can be used to improve the conditions of Black people in contemporary British society. As such, education was chosen as the object of study because it has long been a site of 'organised resistance to racism' by Black people in Britain (Grosvenor, 1997: pg.152).

Black radicalism has, throughout history and place, called for control of the Black community by the Black community economically, politically and socially (Wilson, 2005). The concept of Black controlled institutions has been deemed separatist and widely condemned by liberals of all colours as being unworkable and problematic (King, 1969). Therefore, the first section of this chapter will focus on justifying the position of Black independent organisation. This will be achieved by arguing that living so-called "separate lives" is not the social problem of commonsense thinking and distinguishing between separateness and independence. The second section of the chapter will outline the Black

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[16] Malcolm X (1971: pg.9)

radical critique of the British education system, with particular reference to the focus on culture and the individual in the liberal approach to racial inequality and schooling. It will be argued that a radical take on education sees the school system as an institution that reproduces inequality, thus necessitating spaces of Black independent education. Finally, the third section examines the Black supplementary school movement and argues that in the absence of prospects for wholesale Black independent schools, supplementary projects offer a 'radical and subversive space' (Mirza & Reay, 2000: pg. 523) for a Black radical independent education.

Black independence

Separateness is not the problem

In Britain fear of separateness is seen in the recent proclamation of the end of multiculturalism. The now prime minister David Cameron sees multiculturalism as a 'wrong-headed doctrine' that has lead to communities living 'separate lives' (Sparrow, 2008). This separateness is said to breed mistrust and hatred between ethnic minority groups and the majority population (McGhee, 2005). As discussed in Chapter One, this is based on a liberal understanding of racism, wherein the focus is on prejudiced individual attitudes. The standard logic runs that increased contact between different groups will provide greater understanding and therefore lessen racism. In the field of education we can see this idea at work in the schemes which bus young Muslim and White children into each other's schools (Barnard, 2010). From a Black radical perspective there are two problems with this account. The first was discussed in Chapter One, and is the fallacy that contact increases racial understanding. Arguably, it is in fact the opposite with the White working class being more overtly racist in attitudes precisely because of having more contact and therefore competition with minority

groups. Secondly, if increased contact is not a solution, it follows that spatial and cultural separateness is not the cause of unrest and tensions.

Panics around how Muslims are "integrated" into British society have been quick to pinpoint the blame on the Islamic community as isolated and inward looking, leading separate lives that are the cause of discontent (Vertovec, 2002). These same panics, however, have also neglected the reality that two of the most successful groups in society are also two of the most highly residentially separated: namely the White middle class and those of Indian decent. Birmingham is a good example of a city where we can see these dynamics play out. Sutton Coldfield is the most affluent area of the city, with an unemployment rate almost three times lower than the city average (4.3%), the highest educational attainment (77% A*-C grades at GCSE), and an average household income that is 'highest of all the constituencies in the city' (£36,000pa) (Birmingham City Council, 2009: pg.7). This success is not withstanding that of its 91, 915 residents 94.3% are White in a city where the average population of Black and Asian residents is 29.6%.

Displaying the levels of separation in the Indian community is more complex because of the way the electoral lines are drawn, thereby effecting how populations are counted. If we were to look at the Indian population in the parliamentary electoral seats we would see that the Perry Barr and Ladywood districts account for 27, 995 of the 55,000 strong population of Indians in the city of Birmingham (Birmingham City Council, 2004). That would mean that over half of all people of Indian decent in the city live in two electoral districts in the North West section of the city, which has a population of 195,014 residents in total (Birmingham City Council, 2004). In other words over half of the Indian population live in less than a fifth of the city. This suggests concentration of people of Indian decent, but means that out of the two areas (Perry Barr and Ladywood) the Indian community account for 14% of the overall population, which would not necessarily indicate residential segregation. However, if we

break these results down further we find that 20,558 people of Indian decent live in three smaller local electoral boroughs of Soho, Handsworth Wood and Lozells and East Handsworth (Birmingham City Council, 2006). These three areas combined have a population of 77,550 meaning that Indians represent 27% of their population. Furthermore these numbers mean that 37% of the Indian population in Birmingham live in just 7% of the city. If data were collected on neighbourhood lines, rather than electoral boundaries, there may well be an increase in this measure. What is clear is that there are high levels of concentration of Indians in particular parts of Birmingham. If we look at the profile of the Indian community in the city we can see that they are successful on important indicators such as unemployment, with a rate for men of 10%. This is in comparison to White men 11%, Black Caribbean 33%, Pakistani 23% and Bangladeshi 30% (Birmingham Economy, 2009). It is also evident that the Indian community is highly successful in terms of academic achievement (these two statistics are not coincidental), with 72% of Indian pupils achieving 5 A*-C GCSE's in 2006 in Birmingham compared to the city average of 56% (DfCSF, 2006). As with the White middle class in the city we can see a residentially concentrated community, with high levels of economic and educational success.

If communities living separate lives were a problem, then surely a focus of attention should be on Sutton Coldfield, one of the most racially segregated parts of Birmingham, and the Indian community with high levels of concentration. However, neither group is seen as a "problem" community. The White middle class and the Indian populations are two of the most successful groups and therefore it concerns no one that they are no more or less residentially "integrated" than Muslim groups. From these two example we can see that living "separate lives" only becomes a problem with high levels of poverty or conflict.

Separateness to independence

Increased contact between various groups has never been a concern for Black radicalism. The issue has rather been about how to improve the conditions of the Black community. The focus of Black radicalism has therefore been on community control and not levels of integration. If a community controls its own resources it can use them to improve the material conditions for its members (Garvey, 1986/1923). Not only does this position not privilege diversity, it argues that strong communities of particular groups are the way to remove inequalities from society. "Separate lives" are not seen as the problem here, but the solution. On the face of it multiculturalism may sound like a fit with this perspective. However, though the recognition of difference is welcome multiculturalism shares the fundamental limitation with its successor of community cohesion: both involve state control over the allocation of resources.

Control is important because it shapes how policy is designed and implemented. Housing is a prime example of how multiculturalism is challenged by Black radicalism. Rex & Moore (1971) did a comprehensive study of Birmingham housing policy and found that immigrant communities were being created in particular locations in the city. For Black radicalism this is not a problem, as creating a strong Black community would be advanced with close physical ties. However, the way the council created the communities was to house immigrant communities in substandard, overcrowded housing in the inner cities. This is antithetical to the Black radical cause, which is ultimately about improving the conditions in the community and highlights the distinction between separation on the one hand and segregation on the other.

As Malcolm X (1963) explained,

> Segregation is that which is forced upon inferiors by superiors.... The Negro schools in the Negro community are controlled by Whites,... the economy of the Negro community is controlled by Whites. And since the Negro... community is controlled or regulated by outsiders, it is a segregated community.

Segregation is something that is done to a people in order to control and exploit them. Multicultural housing policy in Britain is an example of segregation and not separation. When Black radicals, like Malcolm X, call for separation they are demanding Black communities that are controlled by Black people, for Black people.

It is important to make a distinction here on the difference between the call for separation in Black radicalism and those of far Right racist ideologies. This is especially the case as in the popular imagery racial extremists are being intrinsically connected to Black radical perspectives. In popular culture this is discernible in President Obama's (2008) speech where he equates his White racist grandmother's attitudes with the radical preaching of Jeremiah Wright on race in America. A key distinction is that in the Black radical position there is no inherent hatred or dislike for any groups as there exists in the far Right. In Chapter One, the anti-White rhetoric of some Black radicals, with particular reference to the Nation of Islam, was discussed and argued that this has to be understood against the backdrop of racism. When people like Malcolm X excoriate Whites this is not because they are White, but because of what they have done as White people. This is in stark contrast to racist beliefs and ideologies that Black people are biologically inferior. There is no advocation of separation for reasons of racial purity as seen in Apartheid, or because we feel superior and different to Whites. In fact as Malcolm X (1971: pg.9) argues, 'this word separation has been misused...a better word than separation is independence'.

When we talk the language of independence we can get to the real issue, which is not about separateness but rather the Black community having control of its own resources to

achieve better conditions. Black independence lays at the foundation of a Black radical position. Education is a good site for exemplifying Black radical praxis, which involves the institution of Black independent education. What marks this position out a radical is that it undermines liberal understandings of society and the role of schools.

Black radical critique of schooling

Education policy- to assimilation and back again

From a Black radical perspective one of the fundamental problems with educational policy in Britain is in relation to racial and ethnic matters is that it has focused primarily on matters of culture and values. From the moment Black and Asian students had contact with British schools, the issue of maintaining and narrating "Britishness" took centre stage in educational policy. Initially the concerns of the government were to make sure that children of immigrants from the New commonwealth would be able to become "fully British", and assimilate into the culture and nation (Solomos, 1991). This assimilationist agenda was deployed in an edict from the Labour government in 1965 that immigrant children should be distributed to other schools once they made up more than 33 percent of a school (Male, 1980). It was seen to be important that immigrants would not be able to change the character of schools and therefore would be forced into adopting the culture and values of the majority. In order to succeed, newcomers would have to become fully and undiscernibly British under the assimilationist agenda. With the mix of different faiths, languages and cultures, this early ideal in British race relations proved unworkable and it was recognised that the diversity in Britain could not be simply dispersed into a uncomplicated and idyllic Britishness (Solomos, 1991).

Multiculturalism was the response to the changes in Britain, which sought to recognise ethnic and cultural difference both in policy and legislation (Pitcher, 2009). The

policy of multiculturalism was to create (through housing policy) and support (through legislation) 'communities of communities', which could be successful and thrive side by side in Britain (Parekh, 2000a; Modood, 2007). Different ethnic groups were now able to be treated differently under the law, as embodied by legislation allowing Sikhs to be exempt from the legal requirement to wear helmets when riding a motorcycle due to the religious wearing of the turban (Parekh, 2000b). Acknowledging and codifying difference in law was a sea change from the policy of assimilation. In relation to schooling, multicultural education also sought to recognise the cultural difference between pupils (Lynch, 1986). Recognition of cultural difference was, however, the extent to which educational policy took up multiculturalism and has been famously criticised as consisting of 'saris, steel bands and samosas' (Troyna & Williams, 1986: pg.24). So whilst knowledge of different religions and celebrations of different festivals were commonplace in multicultural educations such as my own, what was not addressed by multiculturalism was Eurocentric instruction, racist teachers, culturally biased examinations and the hidden curriculum of schooling, which discriminated against pupil of various ethnic backgrounds (Figueroa, 1991). The limits of multicultural policy in schooling has been to create less ethnically diverse schools because of housing policy (Rex & Moore, 1971) and to introduce some colourful culture into school buildings.

In both assimilationist and multicultural educational policy the strategies major concerns were cultural. Firstly, to maintain and perpetuate monoculture and secondly to promote and recognise diverse cultures. The backlash against multiculturalism, particularly in schooling, has again focused on culture and values. As discussed above multiculturalism is blamed for the discontent in many poor communities, as well as the resultant tensions. The new agenda is community cohesion, to bring communities together to understand one another (Cantle, 2001). In a return to the language of assimilation we are all said to need to unite

around our "shared British values" and schooling is seen as a central site in which to promote such unity (Robinson, 2005).

Community cohesion may sound appealing in theory. It is difficult to disagree that people should know people of other ethnicities, or that we should be able to maintain differences but must recognise the common ground we share with everyone in society by virtue of our citizenship of Britain. The objections to community cohesion are not necessarily its broadly stated ideals, or even some local programmes. The problems with community cohesion are twofold. Firstly, continuing the point laboured so far, it provides the solution for racism in the interaction between different groups, when the situation is far more complex than this. Secondly, the version of Britishness and shared values being put forward by the government represents an astonishing step back towards the assimilationist mood of the past (Back et al 2002). Community cohesion is assimilationist because it sets out a normative Britishness, which is enlightened and a force of good that ethnic minority groups need to live up to in order to be members of society, with no values being shared in the other direction (Kundani, 2007). The community cohesion agenda therefore offers no space for the goal in education of Black radicalism, which is that of Black independent and controlled schools. However, in this regard community cohesion is no different from other educational policies, including the more seemingly Black radical friendly multiculturalism.

Multiculturalism and Black radicalism

Whilst multiculturalism argues for the recognition of difference and cultural pluralism in education (Lynch, 1986), the state control of the multicultural agenda meant that the problems facing Black pupils in the schools were never addressed, simply placated with calypso music (Troyna & Williams, 1986). Black radicalism is also at odds with the doctrine because of the terms of debate that multi*cultural*ism sets.

By phrasing difference around culture, multiculturalism create disjunctures that work to automatically delegitimise the Black radical movement. Firstly, it continues to see the problems of racism on a individual level, i.e. cultural understandings of difference that need to be embraced. On the level of education this explains the focus on ethnic celebration rather than liberation. Secondly, it perpetuates the turn that was narrated in Chapter Two towards ethnicity and cultural difference being recognised and celebrated, whilst race and therefore Blackness, is admonished as something from a pre-modern age. The effect this has is to make the potential combinations of multiculturalism and Black radicalism vanish. This is disappointing because multicultural policy has worked to the benefit of the Muslim community in education in ways similar to the call for Black independent schools.

One of the more successful policies connected to multiculturalism is the rise of Muslim faith schools. Though a controversial topic because of fears over separateness (Hickley, 2009), Muslim students have had success in faith schools, achieving higher than the national average in terms of GCSE attainment with 71 % achieving 5 A*-C grades, in 2009 (Buaras, 2010). This could be due to selectivity of the schools and is perhaps class related. However, when comparing students in one of the most deprived boroughs of London, Tower Hamlets, it was found that Muslims in state schools were achieving 36.4% 5 good GCSE pass rate compared to those in Muslim schools being at 63% (Buaras, 2010). Muslim students have traditionally been at the bottom of the tables of GCSE performance (Steven, 2007) but there has been a rise in the last decade in achievement of Pakistani and Bangladeshi students, with the attainment gap increasingly narrowing (DCSF, 2006). The success of Muslim schools can only have contributed to this growing profile of school achievement. The problem from the Black radical perspective is that Black independent schools have been called for but are ignored because Blackness is not seen as a legitimate footing to base enrolment. Culture, embodied in faith, is seen as a real difference whereas the difference of

Blackness is not accepted as meaningful distinctions upon which to base practice (Jenkins, 2005). The cultural focus of British educational policy ties into the liberal basis of society, which is founded upon the colourblind, rational and cosmopolitan individual (McGhee, 2005). Individuals adopt cultures, and it is the recognition of the individual right to choose cultural practice that legitimates cultural differentialism. This focus on the individual leads to serious shortcomings in the liberal assessment of racism within the education system.

Individual racism to individual blame

Access to education and the advantages this bring have been a major focus for the Black community who have not accepted the educational disparities and have put up 'organised resistance to racism in education' (Grosvenor, 1997: pg.152). Education is often seen as the key to overcoming the racial discrimination that effects Black people in society (Searle, 2007). The lower educational attainment of Black young people in schools is importantly seen to be evidence that the schools are failing to produce the equality they set out to achieve (John, 2006). From the liberal perspective the education system is being let down by the racism of individual teachers and a culturally biased curriculum; whilst certain section of the Black community are failing to meet the expectations required to succeed in schools.

Racism in institutions is, therefore, typically located within individual teachers in keeping with a liberal outlook. This teacher racism is manifested in two primary ways in the literature: expectations and exclusions. In terms of teacher racism, there has been much research done on the issue of low expectations teachers have for Black (usually African Caribbean) students (Steven, 2007). It is argued that the stereotypes of Black people lead to a preconceived view that Black pupils will be disinterested and academically less capable (Howarth, 2004). This view leads to a self-fulfilling prophecy, where Black students are

labelled as inferior, treated as inferior and therefore become inferior students (Byfield, 2008). The result of the negative stereotyping of Black students is also to be seen in the higher exclusion rates for Black pupils, which have remained three times as high for African Caribbean male students (Parsons, 2009). Blair (2001) argues that similar behaviours from White children were deemed to be more "naughty" when displayed by Black children in school, with the individual expectations of the teacher for Black children determining that they expect bad behaviour and therefore perceived it. This teacher racism is seen as a blight that holds back Black pupils from succeeding, but importantly remains at the level of the individual. If we can change these biased individuals we can remove racial prejudice from schools.

Ideas of a culturally biased curriculum go beyond the individual level of teacher racism and begin to address how the institution of schooling reproduces racial discrimination. Hargreaves (1982) argues that instruction and examinations are culturally biased towards White middle class students in their composition. A culturally biased curriculum in terms of teaching and examinations would indicate serious structural issues at the institutional level of schools that work against Black (and other) pupils. However, ideas of cultural bias in the curriculum are often limited by being set in a liberal framework that places the effect of this onto individual Black children and how it impacts their personal psychological well being. In other words when we could be dealing with a collective issue at the heart of schooling, we return to a focus on the individual. This can be shown in the particular focus of cultural bias in the curriculum on the subject of history.

It is argued that the exclusion of their history alienates Black pupils from school, feeding a sense of disenchantment (Christian, 2010). Further to simply feeling excluded, the Eurocentric teaching of history in schools has also been accused of lowering the self worth of Black students because it implicitly, and sometimes explicitly, makes them feel inferior in

comparison to the dominant Whiteness they are being presented in history class (Graham, 2001; Shujaa, 1995). It is quickly evident how the lens has been placed on the psychological well being of the Black student. The issue of history is not so much about the curriculum itself (though there are strong arguments made about the relevance of the curriculum to Black youth (see Robinson (1995)) but rather on the effects of alienation and dissonance that such a bias can cause. However, removing alienation would not necessarily involve overhauling the curriculum, from this perspective. When the problem becomes not that Black pupils are put at a disadvantage by the actual teaching and examination, but by the topics involved these deficits can be made up elsewhere. If the school can incorporate some culture and history from the Caribbean and Africa into assembly or at festival events, the problem can presumably be dealt with. This view represents the main failing of multicultural education, in that it is tokenistic to the extent of how much actual serious change there is to the practice of schooling. Walking past a frieze of Caribbean foods on the way to an assembly with a steel band is not going to make up for the deficits of Eurocentric history instruction. The problem is not the individual psychological well being of Black pupils, but a structure of schooling that systematically places Black students at a disadvantage by its processes and organisation. Further to this, when we locate the problem primarily in the teaching of history we neglect that Eurocentric or Whiteness dominated teaching is not solely about topics but about ways of learning and examining (Ladson-Billings, 1995). The maths curricula can be equally as exclusionary to Black (and other) students as the historical one. Culturally biased curricula is far more complex than simply a Eurocentric focus in the history classroom. When we locate the problem of cultural bias in Black pupils being alienated we also begin to move into the region of placing the responsibility for the inequalities in educational outcomes at the door of the Black community. It opens the door to questions of why the Black child is so prone to

disenchantment? Why do they not know their history and heritage? What exactly is going on at home?

Black blame

Central to liberal portrayals of education is that the system is meant to be equal and that it will improve as it progresses and develops (Aronowitz & Giroux, 1986). When faced with the continued achievement gap of Black students, a tendency can emerge to look to the Black population itself for the reason for the persistent inequalities. It should be noted, however, that blaming Black people for being biologically or culturally inferior in terms of educational achievement is by no means novel; the deviant Black person and family have been a key figure in the imaginations of those on the Right from the outset (King, Houston & Middleton, 2001). Charles Murray's (1990) famous take on the underclass has prefigured much of these ideas in the UK. The menace of the single parent, cultureless and benefit dependent Black family, who produce sexually dangerous and criminal offspring that pollute the streets apparently still sits deep in the imaginary of some (for example the journalist Rodd Liddle (Plunkett, 2010)). This more extreme version of blaming Black people is by now to be expected, what is novel is the trend in more recent years of liberals to make arguments that embrace this (watered down) position and increasingly (and more worryingly) commentators from the Black community itself. An example of self blame is Sewell (2009) (see Chapter One for earlier discussion of Sewell). In his book *Generating Genius* Sewell makes it clear that institutional racism is not to blame for the plight facing Black students in schools. He has a clear targets for the ills facing the Black community: Black culture and particularly the Black family and its absent fathers. In explaining the problems of lower achievement and exclusion in schools Sewell (2009: pg.25) argues,

If Black boys are disproportionately 'naughtier' in schools than other pupils because they lack the restraining hand of a father then what can we as a community do? These are the tough questions that our community should have faced long ago. Instead, we avoided them. It was too easy to allow liberal scholars and black nationalists to blame everything white... Fatherhood and its absence is key to understanding the crisis facing many, though not all, black boys in the UK. This is not to deny the deliberate positioning of black males by and in society that still loathes and envies black masculinity. *However we are doing something too ourselves* and too often it happens to be another version of envy and loathing. (emphasis added).

Sewell makes a point to argue that the problem is not racism, but that which 'we do to ourselves' as a community. Fatherlessness is the issue that he foremost identifies within the Black community. Sewell takes a particularly psychological approach to the issue. For him the equation is relatively simply that Black boys are psychological damaged by the effects of growing up without their fathers, in a community bereft of any positive role models. From this point of view the problem is not the school but the Black pupils going to them, their communities and dysfunctional families. Absentee fathers may well have a negative impact on children, and it is certainly not argued here that it is a positive feature of Black community life. Cultural arguments about school success are common (Modood, 2005), however, we must move beyond seeing negative aspects of oppressed communities culture's as being the problem in themselves. Rather we must look at the way negative cultures arise *because* of oppressive conditions. With the case of Black men, we live in a society where one in five Black men are unemployed (Stuart & Hopkins, 2009) and Black men are vastly overrepresented in the criminal justice system (ONS, 2002). Considering these realities should we be surprised that there is a problem with Black men supporting their families? This argument is not to excuse absentee fathers, but to try to explain how a negative culture can

arise. Certainly if we are going to reverse the trend we need to focus on its causes and not simply moralise from our advantaged perches. Yes, absentee fathers is a problem in the community and yes, it is reprehensible. However, until we challenge the racist structures that produce the absentee culture then we will never overcome it.

In Sewell's defence he does attempt to address the situation of the educational success of Black pupils with his 'Generating Genius' programme. However, his flawed philosophy is evident in the practice of the programme. It is aimed at taking talented African Caribbean boys and exposing them to universities in the UK and also in the Caribbean. Though there is nothing wrong with exposing Black young people to high educational environments and expecting higher standards, the inherent flaw in the programme is that the "talented tenth" (Dubois, 1903) model is one that can only benefit those deemed "bright" enough to be the future of the Black community and actually reinforces the marginalisation of the presumably "backward ninetieth". Sewell is a relatively easy target because he openly chastises sections of the Black community and makes no effort to hide his criticism. However, the implicit in this regard is as important as the loud protestations of some.

Reeves & Chevannes (1983) explain how the term "underachievement" in itself lays the blame for the inequalities in the school system at the door of the Black pupils. The assumption from this phrase is that it is the Black students who are underachieving, it is they who should be doing better and it is they who are failing. This implicit assumption ties into obtuse arguments such as Sewell's about the Black family, but also into more subtle ideas like that of Black role models. The idea of Black role models is a strong one for the Black community for young men, with past governmental attempts to enrol "successful" Blacks to steer wayward Black youth onto the correct course (Muir, 2007). The assumption here is that Black men do not have appropriate role models at home and therefore they need these "successful" Black men to come into schools so they can model their behaviour and aim

higher in life. Again, a Black radical position is not against the idea of people going into schools and talking about the options open to Black youth and their experiences. However, it is becomes problematic if we assume that role models are the priority or the cure for solving inequalities in education regarding young Black men. This is because it involves changing the boys and not changing the schools. It is also based on seeing Black familial forms as deviant, which is why "underachievement" and role models are usually, and incorrectly, based around boys.

Black "underachievement" is talked of in ways that almost make it the property of Black boys. It is only when we focus on Black boys that we can use the narrative of the deviant Black family, and in particular the father. It seems like a relatively good correlation: no father equals no role model, which in turn equates to bad school performance. However, what about Black girls? A brief look at the GCSE results by ethnicity in 2006, show that whilst Black girls outperform Black boys, they suffer from the exact same inequalities relative to other girls as their male counterparts (DfCSF, 2007). Considering that the Black mother is apparently the ever present in the Black household, we cannot explain these results by the absence of a women on which to model their behaviours and esteem. The obsession with the educational success of Black boys works to reinforce and provide proof of the failings of the Black family. In reality, the picture of educational inequalities facing Black pupils cannot be explained in simple deviant Black families exemplified in absentee fathers and lack of role models. The problems are real and concrete and exist in the nature and purpose of the school system itself, as explicated by a Black radical position.

The schools work, to make things work

A Black radical take on schooling has as its starting point a contention that challenges the core assumption of liberal education: that schools reproducing inequalities in education

are evidence that the schools are failing. From a Black radical perspective it is just the opposite: the statistics we see repeatedly on success of Black pupils in schools are precisely how it is supposed to be (Seale, 1972). The Black radical position on education follows on from other radical traditions of education, which separate out the idea of schooling from education.

Illich (1973) argues that the purpose of a formal school system, far from being to educate pupils was instead to set up a system of credentialising society. The further you go through the school system, the more credentials you have and the more access to, and justification of, wealth and success in society. For Illich, this process works to codify inequalities in society as the school system is from its outset biased towards those in power. It is important for the system to be seen to be open and accessible to all in order to justify the rewards that those with the correct credentials receive. Those who do not have the right qualifications simply do not have the right to complain about their lot in society because schooling is said to offer them the same opportunities as everyone else. The trick of the system from the radical perspective is to make schools seem egalitarian whilst simultaneously entrenching inequalities. School as the great equaliser is exploded as a myth by radical educational theory. Inequality is seen to be codified and formalised by school system based on qualifications rather than education (Illich, 1973).

The "hidden curriculum" that pervades the organisation of schooling has been explored on both sides of Atlantic. Carter (1993) explains that American schools reflect the middle class White habitus of the dominant group in society and as such put Black pupils at a disadvantage. In the case of African American school pupils Carter argues that the 'non-dominant' cultural capital that young Black pupils need for life in their own communities is antithetical to the dominant cultural capital that is necessary for success in the schools. Clothing, language, attitude and style that Black students tend to display are deemed to be

unsuitable for the school and this marginalises Black students from the outset. It is not difficult to see how these ideas could be used in the British context behind the backdrop of disproportionate exclusion rates and low expectations of teachers (Figueroa, 1991; Graham & Robinson, 2004). That success in schools requires a facilitation to the cultural expectations of the dominant is not a controversial issue (at least not in the Black community). Ladson-Billings (1995) talks of the need to 'code-switch', which means to have knowledge of both the dominant and non-dominant cultural capital of the schools and the community, respectively. Being able to play the system is about knowing when and where to deploy the appropriate cultural resources at the appropriate time. Code-switching and non-dominant cultural capital are welcome ideas from a Black radical perspective as they diagnose a structural problem within the schools and provide a solution that does not denigrate Black cultural forms. The same cannot be said for much of the debate around cultural capital and schooling.

As discussed in Chapter Three, in the United States, Bill Cosby has recently become more famous for his pronouncements on Black culture than for his comedy (Dyson, 2005). Cosby launched a tirade against the Black poor for their way of speaking and dressing, which is where he ultimately laid the blame for poorer school performance. The equation of single parents equals bad family and community is one that has already been discussed in reference to Sewell in the UK, and it is an idea that has purchase with some throughout various Black communities. The difference with the code-switching approach is to argue that some Black cultures *are* deficient and that the dominant cultural capital that is necessary in the schools is what the kids *should* be aspiring to. From the Afristocractic position, the hidden curriculum is not a barrier to Black communities, it is the teaching the necessary values that Black people need to adopt to wholly to better ourselves. Clearly from the Black radical perspective the code-switching position is more desirable, however there are limitations inherent within it.

To some extent code-switching cedes that the dominant cultural capital of the school is legitimate, or at least it does not challenge the dominance of a particular habitus. By accepting that there are arenas where we have to behave, talk and dress differently, some Black students are still put at a distinct disadvantage as to succeed in schools requires extra skills than for those whom are at home in the dominant cultural sphere. This creates a twoness reminiscent of Dubois's (2008/1903) double consciousness, an image of the Black student and citizen being pulled in competing directions by virtue of their Blackness. From a Black radical perspective, the necessity to code switch is recognised as a strategy that is inevitable given the present conditions (we are in the minority after all), however it is not taken as the overriding solution. From a Black radical point of view, we need a school system that does not privilege the dominant and where Black students are not prejudged for their presentational styles. Further to this, the code-switching position also places too much emphasis on the cultural and tends to essentialise Black students by virtue of particular cultural forms. It is very difficult to talk about the generic Black student and a focus on culture tends to make the problem of the school system a particular one for the Black poor. It is the "ghetto" children that do not succeed and it is they who need to learn the appropriate cultural codes for success. Within this argument it is presumably accepted that the Black middle class student, with better access and knowledge of dominant cultural capital is above and outside of the discussion about the schools failing Black pupils. However, it is inappropriate to exclude the middle class Black child from the discussion, as though better off Black students perform better than those who are worse off financially in schools, they still suffer educational disadvantage in relation to other students from similar socioeconomic backgrounds (Strand, 2007).

A radical critique of education also goes further than to challenge the cultural codes of mainstream schooling, but also the knowledge itself that is reproduced in schooling. Gergen

& Wortham (2001) outline Freire's Nutritional Model of education. Freire argues that knowledge produced in the elite centres of learning is passed down through the various levels of education, with no interaction from any party. This unquestioned and elite knowledge is then bestowed on the pupils, and those who assimilate it the best receive the better grades. Freire's argument is that this divorces the pupils (and teacher) from the production of knowledge and privileges the dominant social class as the knowledge is produced in the sphere within which they are more comfortable. Knowledge in this argument is produced and referent to particular values.

Following on from this, the Black radical critique on the hidden curriculum goes deeper than it simply being a reflection of the habitus of the middle classes. The values of the schools system and instruction are themselves being questioned. Light is shined not on whether the cultural bias in the schools is marginalising and keeping Black students from equally achieving successful grades, but onto whether the values *themselves* are appropriate for any Black pupil, not matter how well heeled.

A Black radical stance on education critiques the entire substance and challenges the basis of mainstream schooling. As Dove (1993: pg.431) argues,

anyone aspiring to and believing in the same European-centred cultural value system will undermine and devalue the potential for Africans to appreciate African self-worth and self-development as a basis for self-determination

In the radical sense it is not simply a question of how do we get more Black students to succeed in school, because any success does not necessarily challenge the problems with schooling. The purpose of mainstream schooling, from this perspective, is not only to filter disproportionate numbers of Black people into the bottom rungs of society for the purposes of exploitation, but also to condition all students into Eurocentric understandings that will

reproduce an iniquitous and racist system. There is no "success" to be found in equal levels of achievement in this position. From a Black radical perspective what is necessary is an entirely different approach to schooling where the necessary education for the uplift of the Black community can be achieved. This is why the only solution to the problem of schooling is Black controlled education.

Black radicalism and supplementary schools

Freedom schools

In the United States one of the main programmes of the Black Panther Party was to set up what they labelled 'freedom schools' (Seale, 1970). Huggins & LeBlanc-Ernest (2009) explain how the goal was not only to improve the standards of literacy etc but to provide political education from a perspective that would allow the pupils to think outside of the constraints of the mainstream. In the case of the Black Panthers this was a revolutionary education, to engage people in struggle. The criticisms of such a political stance on education are obvious, as what the Panthers deem education can easily be construed as indoctrination. However, the implicit argument of the Panthers is that the school system at present is indoctrinating young people into following Western ideals and maintaining the status quo. The "political" education that they prescribe is no less political than the liberal mainstream version, which hides behind objectivity and universality whilst privileging and promoting the subjective and particular. The radical critique of schooling does not see any knowledge created as free from the political values of those who produced it (Freire, 1972). Black independent schools would not solely be Black in terms of students and teachers but would present a critical pedagogy based from an understanding of a Black radical positionality and truly transform teaching and understandings.

If racism is a permanent feature that lies at the heart of Western society then the only solution for Black people, in the West, is to create our own institutions that can best shelter us from the racist effects of the system. Creating spaces of Black independent education would enable the development of an appropriate curriculum for mainstream success as well as providing a critical education as to the role and future of Black people in the country. Though the schools would be predominantly Black it would not be a case of separating out all Black students, but rather creating institutions that transformed the educational landscape by doing things radically different. The whole ethos, practice and purpose of the schooling would be called into question and new avenues opened (Gordon, 1998). It is in Black independence where we find the solutions to the permanence of racism.

To briefly return to the debate about Critical Race Theory (CRT) in Chapter One, it is on the level of praxis that we can really see the liberal edifice of the theory. Being distinctly grounded in liberalism, CRT cannot embrace Black independent schools because it goes against the integrationist model of the mainstream. CRT can be radical up to a point (mostly in theory) but is then constrained by its liberal base. Make no mistake here, the Black liberal position is a valid one, with its own set of justification and is necessary in society. In fact, on the national scale the Black radical and liberal work in tandem to improve conditions for Black people. Gains in the civil rights era could not have been made without the radicals and the riots scaring Whites into doing deals (Joseph, 2008). Similarly, if we take the issue of Black independent schools, it would only take one well run school where alternate pedagological and epistemological groundings were proved to work, to shake up the *entire* mainstream school system. In the West the liberal and radical can be two sides of the same coin that forces society to open up to the Black population. So the critique here is not that CRT is liberal, just that we should just not make the mistake of equating it with a radical challenge to the system. It is an important point to make because the radical position is a

necessary voice in society in order to hold the mainstream into account. In terms of education Black radicalism advocates strongly for the institution of Black independent schooling. However, it is accepted that within the margins of the mainstream school system ideal typical Black independent schools maybe not be possible[17]. Therefore, the question becomes about finding spaces where Black independent education could arise outside of the remit of mainstream schooling.

Black supplementary school movement and the state

The resistance by the Black community to the inequities in the school system has led to the creation of educational projects outside of the mainstream, which have been referred to as the Black Supplementary School Movement (Reay & Mirza, 1997). Black supplementary schools have their history in concerned members of the African Caribbean community coming together to provide extra tuition for Black youth in the fundamentals as well as offering, to differing extents, teaching in Black history and cultures (Chevannes & Reeves, 1989; Hines, 1998). Growing spontaneously out of community concern, the movement began on a voluntary basis (Best, 1990) with people organising classes in their spare time, though largely on Saturday mornings, which is why the projects are often dubbed Saturday schools (Stone, 1981). Projects tend to be small to medium sized, due to the ability of volunteers to manage and typically take in all age ranges from 4-16 (Best, 1990; Reeves & Chevannes, 1983b). Programmes supplementing the learning of ethnic minority groups are common the UK, however Black supplementary schools are unique in that they are not based around the provision of religious instruction or language acquisition (Hall et. al 2002; Martin, Crease & Bhatt, 2003). The earliest Saturday was created in 1967 by a group of politically conscious African Caribbean people in Birmingham who were interested not only in getting better

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[17] Black independent schools are not judged by percentage of Black students and do not include Seventh Day Adventist schools which are run by Black churches. This is because they are religious schools and not *Black* schools and therefore can be accommodated within the mainstream acceptance of faith schools.

grades for Black students but also in creating a Black centred radical educational alternative (Andrews, 2007). The history and development of supplementary schools however show the complexities involved in creating a Black radical position on education.

From the outset of supplementary schooling the state took, at the very least, a cautious view of the programmes. There was scepticism about the idea of uneducated Black people taking up the mantle of teaching (Tomlinson, 1988) and the authorities were fearful of Black radicalism being taught (Stone, 1981). Andrews (2007) interviewed those who ran the first supplementary school and their stories are filled with conflicts with the state in the early years. One of the founders of the programme talks of the head of the local education authority threatening to 'lock them up' for starting the project and explains that 'the government itself had an idea about the Saturday school and it wanted to smash it' (Andrews, 2007: pg.30). He goes on to say that the education authority went as far to spread propaganda that the organisers were terrorists and even to send police round to parents houses warning them to stay away from the programme. Aside from the open enmity to the supplementary school programmes has also been the issue of state involvement through funding.

State funding has been a central issue in the supplementary school movement as programme leaders have been wary about the prospect of being co-opted by the authorities (Best, 1990; Dove, 1993). There has been a desire throughout the movement to 'maintain autonomy from the state' (Dove, 1993: pg.444) in order to keep control over the practice of the programmes. Being born out of a community response to a need created by the inadequacies in the school system this should come as no surprise. As Best (1990: pg. 195) explains there is caution that if receiving money from the state then programmes will have to 'avoid criticising the funding agents'. Supplementary schools by their very existence criticise mainstream schools and there has been a concern raised over the years to make sure that the

state should not interfere with their practice. However from the days of direct conflict with the local authorities there has developed a much more open relationship with the state.

In 2006 Birmingham City Council commissioned a report into African Caribbean Education and Employment and included a section on Black supplementary schools as a route to addressing inequalities (Visions of Esteem, 2006). Further to simply acknowledging the strength and role of supplementary schools, Andrews (2007) found that out of ten supplementary school projects examined all had some state funding, including the oldest and most radical project that used to "battle" with the local authority. Some projects relied entirely on state funds and had money available to pay qualified teachers for their time in the projects. Stone (1981) highlights the difference in supplementary school projects by drawing a distinction between on the one hand 'official' and on the other 'self-help' projects. Official projects are those that are state funded and can afford qualified teachers with some form of payment, whilst 'self-help' programmes are those that fund and rely on themselves. The oldest and most radical supplementary school, though accepting state funds, make sure that they do not rely on the money and generate income from a larger project (Andrews, 2007). This split of official versus self-help does not draw a perfect fault line in supplementary schooling, but it does generally illuminate a substantial difference in the practice and ideology between different programmes.

Academic attainment vs. Black education

Within Black supplementary schooling there are differing ideologies and therefore purposes of the programmes, with the fundamental split being those that attempt to supplement what mainstream schools do and those that try to present an alternative form of Black education (Chevannes & Reeves, 1989; Reay & Mirza, 1997; Sharron, 1984). Due to the inequalities in the education system a focus on the fundamentals of schooling, Maths and

English, has been at the centre of the projects as Stone (1981: pg. 97) explains 'acquiring basic educational skills was the basis of what went on in supplementary schools'. From Andrew's (2007) study it was found that the basics were key across all projects, certainly no less in the more radical self-help initiatives. However, there has been a tension around the balance of promoting success in schools and a more culturally and historically based learning (Mirza & Reay, 2000). What often appears to be lacking in the debate is the distinction between academic attainment and acquiring skills necessary for success in mainstream schooling. All projects focus on basics of Maths and English, but from a radical perspective learning English skills, in particular is a language skill as much as it as an educational one. Gordon (1998: pg.66) argues that 'students do not learn to read and write, they read and write learn'. By this she means that basic skills are necessary in order to be educated; it is not the teaching of the basics that the differing perspective disagree but on the basis and purpose of the education that these skills should be used to learn. Official projects tend to deal in Key Stage results and school attainment, whilst self-help projects are concerned with Black education. One of the criticisms from the official stance has been on what constitutes Black education for the self-help projects.

A focus on the teaching of Black history has been criticised by some observers as secondary to the needs of getting through school (Stone, 1981). In the 2007 study Andrews found that some were concerned that there was little point to knowing Black history if students were failing in schools. There was wariness displayed at a level of cultural learning overtaking the substantive issues that faced Black students in the school system. As recently argued, skills that would benefit schooling were found to be central to the self-help programme in the study and it is also here argued that there be no necessary loss in value through teaching a Black history and culture. Innovative forms of curriculum and pedagogy are central to building educational practice that can engage and challenge pupils (Ladson-

Billings, 1995). From a radical standpoint, however, there could be an issue with the cultural nationalism that has taken hold of Black alternative politics (see Chapter Three) and the salvation that is being sought by some in Africaness and cultural values. If cultural nationalism is being taught as the political education in self-help Black supplementary school programmes, then this would ultimately be detrimental to the potential for these spaces to be used to nurture the Black radical position.

Conclusion

Education is a key battlefront in the fight to transform the conditions of Black people. Racism is embedded in the structure of a school system that constantly reproduces racial inequality for the Black population of the Britain. Therefore, from a Black radical perspective, it is necessary to create spaces of Black independent education where mainstream ideologies can be challenged as well Black children equipped with the schooling necessary to succeed in society. Black supplementary schools have existed in Britain for over forty years and a present a 'both radical and subversive' space that to some extent lies outside the provision of the mainstream school system (Mirza & Reay, 2000: pg. 523). With the ultimate Black radical goal of Black independent schools being nowhere on the horizon, Black supplementary schools represent ideal spaces for the creation of Black radical independent education. The history of Black supplementary schools has seen ideological cleavages, with more official projects dedicated to supplementing mainstream schooling. There exists, however, a more radical tradition that attempts to overcome the hidden curriculum and provide a more overtly political education aimed at not only school success but a radical critique of society. It is within this tradition that a Black radical position has the potential to engage with the Black community. The following chapter will discuss how to

research the present and potential role of Black radicalism within the Black supplementary school movement.

Towards a Black Sociology

The Black scholar can no longer afford to ape the allegedly 'value free' approach of White

scholarship

Nathan Hare[18]

Introduction

Black radicalism has been defined, justified and exemplified by outlining a critique on mainstream schooling, throughout the first chapters of this thesis. Black supplementary schools have been identified as a potential space for the construction of a Black radical independent education, arising as they do out of the Black community's resistance to racism in education and importantly being controlled by that community. The focus of the empirical research will therefore be on the prospects of Black radical independent education being located within Black supplementary schools. This ties into the research questions, which focus on how Black radicalism can be understood and utilised in contemporary British society. Following the commitment to the Black radical position, a number of research questions arise that are the focus of the study,

- Does a radical construction of Blackness already exist within the Black supplementary school movement?

- How do we support supplementary schools and tie Black radicalism into their work?

- What would a Black radical independent curriculum involve?

- Can supplementary schools be a vehicle for Black radicalism in the community?

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[18] Hare (1998/1973: pg.74)

In order to pursue these politically driven research questions this chapter will attempt to outline a potential Black sociology based on the Black radicalism expressed in the preceding chapters. The first section looks at the basis of founding a Black sociology in previous scholarship and presents a critique of "White Sociology". Central to the potential of a Black sociology has been the critique by various Black sociologists of Western mainstream sociology and the role of ideology in research. Much of social research, from positivism to Marxism, is characterised as White sociology (Ladner, 1998), in that it is ideological committed to the West. The key point is to move away from ontological and epistemological critiques and move to ideological ones, and Black sociology attempts to create a 'science of liberation' (Staples, 1998/1973: pg.168). The roots of sociology avoiding normative questions in Western sociology are traced, drawing on the positivist foundation of the discipline and notions of objectivity. Attempts made to challenge the basis of traditional research, in the form of interpretivist and postmodern, positions will be explored and their continued dodge of the normative explained by their replacing the function of objectivity with subjectivity. Action research, in its many forms, will then be discussed in relation to its critique of orthodox research and knowledge claims, and the potential to promote positive social change. It will be argued that the critical positions of interpretivism, postmodernism, critical theory and action research have been limited by challenging the ontological and epistemological basis of research and, therefore, mostly promoting methodological changes. Particular attention will be paid to Marxism, as a paradigm that acknowledges the ideological basis of truth and promotes radical action in the social sphere. Marxist theory is still characterised as White sociology, as there has been no recognition of its core assumptions being predicated on Eurocentrism.

Based on the epistemological position of a Black sociology, the method of the empirical research will be detailed and justified. A Black radical participatory ethnography in

a longstanding self-help Saturday school will be outlined and used in order to investigate the role and potential of Black radical independent education within the Black Supplementary School movement.

Black sociology and critique of the mainstream

Black sociology

The most complete statement on a Black sociology has come from Ladner's (1988/1973) collection *The Death of White Sociology*. From this collection it is clear that it is not epistemology nor methodology that defines Black sociology, but rather ideology—the commitment to liberation. Ideology is the prism through which we view reality; therefore Black sociology represents a real challenge to the mainstream because it offers a different vision. The ontological question of "what is?" is answered concretely with "White superiority", with there being various epistemological ways to access this. The fundamental concern for Black sociology is improving the condition of the Black community and has been described as the 'science of liberation' (Staples, 1998: pg.168). Numerous methodological approaches are used in this regard, from the quantitative to qualitative. Whilst substantively outlining what a Black sociology would entail has perhaps not been comprehensively achieved[19], the power of the concept lies in its critique of Western sociology, which it identifies as ideologically White and vitally in need of an alternative (Hunter, 2002).

The fundamental problem of the West is not recognising Whiteness, which obscures the reading of everything (Robinson, 1983). For example, in Chapter Two it was argued that in a White sociology racism is wished away or demoted as a secondary factor at the periphery in the organisation of society; a kink in the system that can be solved by reform. No dualism between Black and White is being drawn upon here when referring to Black and White

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[19] Though Armstrong (1979) does lay out some tenets focussed around subject matter and ideological commitment

sociologies. It is recognised that there are probably numerous sociologies conducted throughout the globe based on differing political ideologies. White sociology is, however, not something carried out exclusively by White people, the colour of the sociologist, in fact, has little importance. What is important is the ideological commitment to Western advancement. Therefore a neo-liberal Black Nigerian sociologist promoting "democratising" of power relations in slums would be considered a White sociology. In the same vein a Black sociology can also be carried out by any other racial group, as the definition is producing knowledge useful to liberation. Colour coding the sociologies may be unhelpful, for it is not the colour itself that is important but what that colour represents. However, there is a fundamental racialisation of the West that is central to the reproduction of oppression and as such the term White sociology is appropriate. Attaching the label of White does not need to be negative. It is hoped that the recognition of the meanings and understandings produced by Whiteness can be sufficiently interrogated and transformed. This task, however, is not the responsibility of a Black sociology, which is charged with freeing Black people from their oppressive role in society. In doing so, a critique of White sociology is necessary, not least because Black sociologists reside in mainstream institutions in the West.

A Black sociology critiques sociology from the traditional to the radical as being White sociology, in that it is ideologically committed to the West (Ladner, 1998). Positivism and postmodernism are typically viewed as antithetical to each other, however Collins (2000) sees their binary relationship as one of many central to Western ideology; for her they are two sides of the same coin. The interplay and discussion between the two different positions are essential to the maintenance of the status quo and Western dominance. Alternative positions and challenges to the dominant facilitate ideas of democracy and freedom of thought. However, the two extremes never challenge the foundation of Western dominance, because they are ideologically committed to its programme. Similarly, understanding the rejection of

normative questions in mainstream Western research traditions is central in illuminating the Black sociological critique.

Roots of avoiding normative questions

The roots of the rejection of normative questions within sociology lie in the origin of the discipline. Positivism and its caricature of the natural sciences lay at the foundation of sociology and to an extent is still the bedrock of the discipline (Delanty, 1997). The Comtean notion of methodological rigour that can uncover value free, objective truth gave birth to sociology, the 'science of society' (Halfpenny, 1982). Authentic knowledge was derived by basing the study of the social world on the methodology adopted in the natural sciences (Giddens, 1974). Firmly tied into the enlightenment project, and fundamentally important to the West's image of itself, social science reigned over superstition, tradition and other subjective ways of knowing (Delanty, 1997). In order to have relevance knowledge had to achieve scientific status. In a positivist framework, politics is separated from social science and ideology is debarred from conflicting with the objective truth (Hammersly & Atkinson, 1983). Involvement in normative questions becomes the cardinal sin of any researcher. To be engaged is to remove objectivity, which the scientific method is designed to provide. Access to the Ivory Tower in positivism is dependent on the avoidance of asking the normative questions and accepting the role of the disconnected, unbiased researcher.

The positivist reading of the natural sciences has been critiqued as well as any attempt to ape them, by interpretivist and postmodern positions. The nature of the subject matter in the social is said to make any form of value free, objective knowledge impossible (Winch, 1957). The idea of a social science is itself delegitimised by the backlash against science as progress and the impossibility of defining even what equates to a natural science (Fuller, 1997). An entirely different conception of ontology and epistemology are put forward, based

on subjectivity and interpretive nature of social reality, in interpretivism and postmodernism (Burkitt, 1991). However thoroughgoing the critique of positivism has been, the central feature of normative avoidance was maintained in the interpretivist and postmodern critiques. Subjectivity performs the function that objectivity had previously. Social reality becomes splintered into multiple truths, where concrete objectivity is replaced with relativism (Delanty, 1997). Within the critiques of positivism it becomes impossible to say what should be done because to do so would be to miss the inherent complexity of the social. Normative claims are banished because it is necessary to see from every viewpoint and understand all the truths being produced (Taylor, 1984). In the world of subjectivity, the researcher admits their values and role is to describe and to document the discourses at work.

The following quote from Weber (1949: pg.111) is emblematic of the intepretivist position,

the knowledge of the *cultural significance* of *concrete historical events and patterns* is exclusively and solely the final end which among other means, concept construction and the criticism of constructs also seek to serve (original emphasis).

Weber is here acknowledging the role that culture play in the understanding of events and concepts. There can be no claims to any universal truth as differing values judgments of cultures will lead to different understandings. Weber therefore, draws significant limits to the role of social research: the understanding of the significance of events and patterns to the culture in which we reside. To go beyond this is to be proscriptive and dogmatic. There are no universal laws or causation to be found in the social realm; interpretation alone is the goal for social researchers.

Weber is also explicit about the researcher attempting value neutrality and the avoidance of normative claims. He argues, 'it can never be the task of an empirical science to

provide binding norms and ideal from which directives for immediate practical activity can be derived' (Weber, 1949: pg.52). Objections here appear to be to a politics based on, or justified by, empirical research. Exception is being taken to political dogma being legitimised by research, no doubt in reference to the Marxist position. Black sociology, however, does not base a political programme on the empirical findings, on the science, it is quite the opposite. Black sociology is based on the political programme itself and is focused on ways to advanced that political project. No doubt, the ontological belief in the existence of a racist society is informed by findings from empirical research, however a Black sociology would articulate clearly that this ontological position is reached ultimately with recourse to ideology. That is to say that we interpret society as being racist because of our political beliefs. A Black sociology is then founded not only on the belief of a racist society, but also the commitment to a Black radical response to this reality. It cannot be said that a Black sociology is, in itself, dogmatic because there is no attempt made to make claims as to the truth of society, these are taken from the political position of Black radicalism. Likewise, it would be wrong to criticise interpretivism as dogmatic, it is the ideology that is at the foundation liberal individualism that provides the dogma. Interpretevism is simply the result of adopting a political ideology of liberalism and applying it to social theory.

The conception of truth outlined in Black sociology here comes across as very relativistic. A racist society cannot be said to be objectively true, if it requires a particular ideology to recognise it. In response to accusations of relativism, we are using a different standard of truth. I am one hundred percent certain that society is intrinsically racist. This is due to my reading of the empirics, the theory and my experiences. Now someone else may see things in exactly the opposite way based on similar criteria to myself. Debating who is right and wrong in order to determine the truth of the matter is fruitless. We can never persuade the other without an evaluative appeal. Truth is useful in the relation that it has to

the material world. The ultimate question is "can my truth of the racist society motivate enough people to bring about a movement to change it?". Make no mistake, a Black sociology firmly outlines a truth in a racist society that exists independent of ourselves, however, the point is not to *prove* this as true but to *change* it. In order to do this we have to mobilise our interpretations of the social word into political programmes that can improve society. Furthermore, White sociology, serves precisely this function for "mainstream" political ideology.

The critical theory of Habermas critiques interpretativism and postmodernism as producing a "communicative understanding", a passive and descriptive knowledge (Brown & Jones, 2001; Carson, 1990). Critical theory shuns this relativism and attempts to lay the foundation for liberatory action (Kinchelhoe & McLaren, 1998). Critical reflexivity is put forward as necessary to emancipate, involving a critique of the dominant and the position of the researcher (Carson, 1990). If the truth in positivism is objective, interpretevism is subjective then in critical theory the truth lies in the critique. The problem here in answering normative questions is that critique is not enough. There is a commitment to the oppressed and therefore also an incorporation of values into analysis and research, as Burawoy (2005b) explains in the development of a critical sociology in the United States in the seventies. However, he also outlines its major limitation, that critical or radical sociology was largely focused on abstract critique of traditional sociology that played out within the walls of the university. Being confined to the Ivory Tower and adopting a highly specialised academic language, Burawoy explains how the effect of critical theory on the social world was severely limited and could only impact academia. A central criticism of Western sociology, then, is the role of the university and the knowledge produced inside it.

Role of the university

The location of the university and its role in society cannot be undervalued when discussing the limits of sociological research. There is a tendency to see the university as sitting outside of society and the knowledge produced being of a different nature to "popular knowledge" (Fuller, 1997). Importantly, university knowledge, or elite knowledge, is not only seen as different but better, more valid and therefore deserving of greater authority and therefore is legitimate. Freire (Gergen & Wortham, 2001) explains this understanding of knowledge is problematic because "scientific" knowledge is produced, for the most part, by elites in the university. An important note here is that even when people working in creating knowledge are not necessarily in themselves members of an elite class, the institutions and bodies of knowledge they conform to are and therefore the meanings the knowledge produce is usually so. Freire explains that this authentic knowledge is then transferred down through society via the schooling system, in his nutritional model of education. Authentic knowledge is imbibed by the teachers who feed it on to the students. Central to his argument is that this knowledge being produced by the elites is therefore repressive to the masses in society in maintaining the status quo.

Universities as producers of authentic knowledge play a key role, then, in the maintenance of existing social relations. Knowledge production is assigned to those with elite status and the intellectual is kept apart from the activist, in this arrangement, with the mind (the academic) separated from body (practical). The function of educational institutions cannot also be overlooked here. Universities are part of the wider education system and as such, are inextricably tied into ideas of meritocracy and liberalism. To some, they are colonising institutions in the same way that schools are (Stone, 1981): factories that produce the drones of capitalist society. Illich's (1973) critique of the school system being a system of credentialism was outlined in Chapter Four, wherein inequalities are legitimised by creating

hierarchies of qualifications and the school system is not about education, but achieving these qualifications. The university is essential here, as it represents the zenith of credentialism and the knowledge produced cannot be divorced from this. The conservative function of educational institutions has created distrust from certain groups in society.

Central to any critique of mainstream social research, then, is the role of the university in respect of the community. My experience of engaging with some community organisations has been one of suspicion. "Student", "PhD" and "university" are not always words of currency. There is a feeling that I have to explain and justify my wish to be involved in academia, at times. Such reticence is not about methodological issues and is the exact opposite of a cry for more public engagement by sociology. Some have had quite enough of the public role the university plays and want no part of it. This is particularly the case when working within Black communities, which have more reasons for suspicion than most (West, 1993). Numerous authors have, nevertheless, called for a greater involvement in the public sphere and a dismantling of the Ivory Tower (most notably recently, Burawoy, 2005). Strand et al (2003), outline Community Based Research (CBR) as a method to bridge the gap between the university and the community. The tenets of CBR are collaboration, valuing multiple knowledges, and a goal of social change. Authority is given to knowledge from everyday people, in the sense that 'experiential knowledge of community is central to epistemology of practice' (pg.11). CBR is an attempt to transform the role of the university in the public sphere, by making the university a useful resource to the community.

There are similarities in CBR to a Black sociology in that the main goal appears to be bringing about social change in concert with those in the community. The difference resides, again, on the ideological level. For Strand et al (2003) the researcher should aid the community activist to 'leverage new resources and better mobilize the ones they have, develop their capacity, and participate more effectively in our democracy' (pg.20). Social

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change is being drawn very clearly here in a particularly mainstream manner. Participation in the mainstream is outlined as the solution to social ills. The limits of CBR is the ideological position at its root.

Strand et al's (2003) inclusion of popular knowledge is only in the creation of an "epistemology of practice". The role of the university in producing conservative and dominating knowledges is not problematic for Strand et al. What they suggest is increasing the reach of the university to work with the community to solve specific, and localised, problems. The fundamental difference between CBR and a Black Sociology is that what Strand et al are presenting is a knowledge of practice, not knowledge through action. Being ideological committed to "our democracy" and reform prevents CBR from fundamentally critiquing the role of the university and the knowledge that it produces. Black sociology represents knowledge through action. In attempting to change the social world, we transform the understandings of race, nation, community and society. Authority is not derived from the university, or any idea of "science", but rather from the change produced. Of course, there have been attempts within mainstream research to actively engage themselves in the process of social change, however, they share the ideological limitations of CBR which restrict their criticality and theory of knowledge.

Limits of Action research

Action Research

Different forms of action research exist but the basic tenets are outlined by Somekh, (2005). She explains how research is 'politically informed and engaged'(pg.7) and uses the praxis cycle of action-reflection-action and collaborating with participants to promote social change in concrete situations. Reflexive knowledge is built up, which is seen as historically and politically situated. Carr & Kemis (1983) highlight critical action research as involving

critical reflection of actions taken to improve conditions. Action research has taken on board the criticisms of positivism, interpretivism and critical theory. Knowledge is situated, context driven and there is no relativity here. We not only throw our lot behind the oppressed but actively engage with them (Dash, 1999). There is also an attempt to address fundamental normative questions: we *should* get directly involved. However, there are limitations to the criticality of the variants of action research.

Action research commonly takes place within schools and this location is insightful and will be used to describe the limitations of this form of research. Various problems of the classroom are identified, sometimes by teacher-researchers, and critical reflection is taken on various strategies to improve the situation (Somekh, 2005). Any potential criticality is limited in this situation by a highly localised research settings of research within mainstream institutions. Insights into the working of a particular classroom are so specific that their usefulness cannot extend beyond just that. What is presented is knowledge of practice and not knowledge through action. This principle seems implicit by demarking knowledge as contextually situated. Boundaries are placed on criticality when creating a knowledge of practice, meaning there can be no fundamental challenge to the dominant.

Perhaps more important with the education example is that schools represent dominant ideology and knowledge claims and have a central role in the their reproduction (Illich, 1973, Seale, 1970). Solutions to situations arising in a school can only go so far in their critical reflexivity. Too much focus on institutional problems and support from the school for the research can quickly evaporate. All action research is not carried out in schools but it is indicative of the limits of the method: highly localised knowledge and institutional barriers. Action research can tend to promote reform and adjustments through established channels. There is nothing wrong with this in itself but it does go to the root of the issue: the ideological foundation of research. A variety of action research projects have been conducted

and it is noteworthy that the language of "democracy" and "social justice" are used as though they exist anywhere in the world (Brydon-Miller et,al, 2003; Gergen, 2003; Noffke, 1997).

Limits of Participatory Action Research

Participatory action research (PAR), one of the more radical action research variants, arose from the "global south" and is committed to aiding the poor and oppressed to 'progressively transform their environment by their own praxis' (Fals-Borda & Rahman, 1991: pg.13). Knowledge produced from the university by "experts" is criticised as dominating and oppressive. The aim of PAR is to engage the oppressed to create new and liberating knowledge by democratising knowing (Brown & Tandon, 1983). Central to this knowledge is action and the commitment of the people to improve the conditions they face. PAR represents a critique that questions the legitimacy of knowledge produced by elites and challenges dominant conceptions by attempting to create new transformative understandings from the actions of the oppressed. However, even in PAR, one of the more radical exponents of action research, there remains a dodge of the normative.

Gaventa (1991: pg.131) outlines the inspiration behind engaging the people in producing knowledge,

> The believer in popular participation must hope that the vision and view for the world that is produced by the many will be more humane, rational and liberating than the dominating knowledge of today that is generated by the few

From this view, what we should do is throw our lot in with the oppressed and help them to produce their societal altering knowledge. We cannot dominate the people, so our research questions and goals must be led by them. The role of the researcher takes on that of a facilitator to the masses. Methodologically transforming the relationship of researcher and the

people is central, as is reducing the dominance of elite knowledge. However, fundamental to any serious social change must be a bonded ideology. It can surely not be enough to hope that the many will be more benevolent than the few.

The idea that PAR research that works with different, and often competing, groups of "the many" will lead to significant social change, appears to rest on one of two conceptions of society. Firstly, the belief in democracy as the solution to iniquities, as society simply needs to open up and be accountable to all of its citizens. The argument being, that if knowledge is democratised and the people can have a say in creating their understandings and futures, positive change will occur as a consequence. At the heart of this assumption appears to lie a faith in a redefined Enlightenment project; there exists a pure progressive knowledge out there and once we can accesses it by channelling the will of the people we will create a better society. This new knowledge is not intended to challenge necessarily existing understandings, as Fals-Borda & Rahman (1991) outline two different types of knowing: "scientific" and "popular". The authors also explain that they are 'not denying the merit of science' (pg.148), but aim to engage the people to produce their own scientific knowledge. PAR is concerned with a refinement of popular knowledge into a "legitimate", "fully scientific" force that can be used to transform the conditions of the oppressed. With this new knowledge, the poor could participate fully in society. Different groups could then fight their battles and become recognised as contributors to society.

If the social change sought through PAR is more wholesale, or radical, then it must be assumed that the knowledge that the diverse groups of people create will be the same; that they will push for the same changes because they are aware of the conditions they face. Fals-Borda & Rahman (1991) are keen to avoid a Marxian base to their work and attempt to not talk down to and dominate the people, instead taking the position of many groups as the advance vanguard. However, implicit within PAR is an assumption of leading the oppressed

to a truth that if we cannot access it, we are certainly aware of and they are blind to; a position that is highly reminiscent of Marx's false consciousness. The figure of the dispossessed Proletariat lays in the shadow of PAR. A Marxian base is not a criticism in itself, but it is vital to understanding the ideological viewpoint of PAR and therefore its limitations.

The main criticism, forwarded here, of PAR is the devaluation of "popular knowledge", within its theory. Our role in PAR is to help the people to produce a legitimate scientific knowledge, as Fals-Borda & Rahman, (1991: pg.3) explain the goal of PAR is the

…acquisition of serious and reliable knowledge upon which to construct power, or countervailing power, for the poor oppressed and exploited groups and social classes-the grassroots-and for their authentic organisations and movements.

This seems to suggest that the understandings of "popular knowledge" are somehow inadequate and in need of transformation in order to be useful. Back (2007: pg.12) describes the traditional view in sociology where 'the difference between a professor and a bus driver is that the professor can say stupid things with complete authority while the bus driver is not authorised to make brilliant insights'. Fals-Borda & Rahman (1991) remain steeped in this devaluation of knowledge by seeking to sanitise and justify popular understandings by presenting them as '"scientific" to give them 'socially determined forms of authority' (Back, 2007: pg.12) that reside in the university. Involving everyday people is essential to creating liberatory knowledge, but the process has to be dialectical and cannot simply be to take so called "popular" understandings and transform them into "scientific" knowledge. It can never be a question of their knowledge and our knowledge. We have to build a collective knowledge, not separate ourselves from society. In reality, it is absurd to talk of ourselves in

the academy on the one hand and people in the real world, on the other. At all times we are the people, just in a particular location.

Fals-Borda & Rahman (1991) talk as though liberatory knowledge is in itself the solution. Once we have the knowledge then we are free. This, however, is not the case. Knowledge itself is neither liberatory nor oppressive. It is not as simple as the oppressors holding the knowledge to exploit and mystifying the oppressed, the truth alone cannot set you free. For example Malcolm X (1965: pg170) talks of his realisations about race and society as like the falling 'snow off a roof'. At once he could see the condition and the situation oppressing him and understand his life to that point. However, this epiphany did not liberate him. He remained as oppressed as before. Even if every Black person in America had the same realisation simultaneously this it would not, in itself, change the condition of their oppression (though it would certainly effect its nature). In fact, the realisation of oppressive conditions can often have a negative effect, as Black identity research has alluded to.

One of the most influential models of Black identity in the United States is William Cross's Negrescence theory (1971, 1991). The model is made up of stages that lead to the transcendence of "becoming Black" positively (as discussed in Chapter Three). Key to this process is an 'encounter' that turns people on to their Blackness, for example the murder of Martin Luther King, or an experience of overt racism. Prior to this encounter, Cross theorises that many Black people are unaware of their Blackness and therefore their position of being oppressed by a racist society. The encounter is what wakes them up, the 'snow off the roof', that tunes them into their Blackness and racism. Encounter experiences are not taken to be liberatory in themselves. In fact, Cross theorises that the next stage after the encounter is the 'immersion/emersion'. In this stage a person immerses themselves completely in Blackness and has a good deal of anger towards the White world. Cross sees this as necessary but not liberatory, as the hate is consuming and prevents any reasonable action for liberation. The

goal in the model is the 'internalisation' of the Black radical message and to go beyond anti-White hatred. Even at this point we do not have a liberatory identity, as internalisation alone is not enough without the commitment to change the conditions. Fulfilment of Negrescence is in the 'internalised-committed' who have a liberatory identity and can therefore create knowledge to emancipate.

Important to take from the Cross model is that he did not see these stages as being necessarily following on from one to the next. Many people have an encounter and never progress from immersion/emersion. Realisation of a racist society, the truth, is not enough to set us free. In fact the discovery that society functions against your interests can lead to frustration and resignation. Accepting that society is fundamentally racist and that wholesale change is needed to end oppression can be crippling. So immense is the task that it is like staring into an abyss. Where do you start when nothing can change until everything does? If you are at the bottom of society and have nothing to lose then a complete overhaul may well be inviting, however for those of us in material comfort it is a different story. Huey Newton (1974) describes 'revolutionary suicide' as the acceptance that you will die in the struggle for freedom. For the middle-class, revolutionary suicide is the acceptance that your life of relative comfort must end. Fanon (1969) also argues that the middle class can never be on the side of the oppressed because it is not in their interests. Awareness can also, then, be the cause of rationalisation, justification and reproduced ignorance.

Liberatory knowledge is not the awareness of the conditions of exploitation but rather the knowledge of how to bring those oppressive conditions to an end. As such, the only way to achieve liberatory knowledge is to be directly being involved in struggles for liberation. Knowledge of this kind is what Staples (1998/1973: pg.168) had in mind when he spoke of the 'science of liberation'. We can only achieve this by not being "for the people" or "enabling the people" (as in PAR), but by being "of the people", which in involves an end of

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the separation of academic and popular knowledge. Gone is the objective or impartial researcher, replaced by the activist researcher who produces knowledge to change social conditions, which can never be separate from the "people".

Black sociological critique of Marxism

A commitment to action, and siding with the people is, then, not enough. To produce serious social transformation commitment needs to be tied to an alternative ideology to truly challenge dominant understandings. Marxism represents such a competing ideology. Capitalism is defined as oppressive and the blueprint for a communist development is laid out. Normative questions are clearly answered in calls for the siding with the Proletariat. Marx straddled the university/community divide writing explicitly political works in keeping with his theories. Marxism has drawn criticism from academia, mainly because of this, with dogmatism being the most common accusation. However, the problem with Marx from the purview of Black sociology has nothing to do with blurring the lines of research and activism, but that he absolutely fails to address his Whiteness and produces a Eurocentric theory (Lemelle, 2001; Robinson, 1983). In other words his ideological Whiteness limits the usefulness of his theories for Black sociology. This is not to say a Marxist analysis is totally rejected. Black people worldwide, and other oppressed groups, have gravitated to a Marxist analysis and tried to apply it to their situations (Robinson, 1983). Marx's commitment to action, grounded in normative questions, provided valuable insights into the workings of capitalism that can be used to understand the present and create the future of oppressed groups. There are, however, limits to a Marxist analysis stemming from its ideological Whiteness.

Within a Marxist analysis capitalism is at once oppressive and progressive. In the development of a communist society, capitalism is essential in Marx's theory of history

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(Marx & Engels, 2002/1888). Indeed communism builds from capitalism, as capitalism progresses from feudalism. Advancement, progress of the Enlightenment project is maintained within a Marxist analysis. West is best for Marx, as is evident in his writings about the backwardness of the colonies (Lemelle, 2001). Therefore, his analysis is Eurocentric and he misidentifies the fulcrum of historical change, the Proletariat, in the European working class (Robinson, 1983). Oppression was universalised in the experience of White men, though at the time Black people were being reduced to commodities. This is the most fundamental flaw in a Marxist analysis. The industrial workers, as Whites (Europeans), were always going to receive privileges from the oppression of the darker people of the globe. The concessions and compromises that took place with the industrial workers over the decades and the conservatism of the trade unions was, perhaps, inevitable. The most serious repression throughout the dawn of capitalism has been reserved for those outside of the bonds of Whiteness, which tie the industrial worker into Western capitalism (this argument is developed in Chapter Two).

Marx's penchant for the Enlightenment also caused him to devalue the peasantry as a mover in history. The city was advanced and the country backwards, so how could the peasant possibly become a Proletarian and lead the march into communism? The irony here is of course, that most communist revolutions have been led by the peasantry (Robinson, 1983). Failure to take account of Whiteness—tied into industrial advancement and maleness— is the fundamental failure of Western thought generally and social research specifically.

Black sociology is also open to an ideological critique. Are we just replacing Eurocentrism with Afrocentrism, and reducing everything to race at the ignorance of class and gender, for instance? Legitimate questions, that ultimately lie at the political level and involve an alteration of the ideological assumptions. Critical reflexivity is essential here. We have to be accountable to whatever knowledge we produce by constantly critiquing our

ideological basis. We need to be reflective about our experience, observations and actions at all times (Milner, 2007). Accusations here will be dogmatism and producing inadequate research, blinded by politics. The reply is simple: all research and knowledge is political, whether admitted or not. All sociological approaches at some point answer normative questions, with the reply typically being "we *should not* get involved". The view that fact be separate from values, or our role should be interpretive and seek for the range of discourses, comes from a particular conception of society, which is as political in its nature as that foregrounding Black sociology. An apolitical stance remains a political one, and simply put we always stand with someone and to stay out of the fray is to side with and buttress the dominant.

Important to note is that though a thorough critique of White sociology has been presented, it is not being argued that everything produced by the discipline is illegitimate. Insights gained from a particular perspective can be useful to another. Methodological and analytical concepts are used and built upon where appropriate. Black sociology is able to borrow from diverse and competing paradigms of White sociology precisely because the level of critique is that of ideology.

Towards a Black Sociology

A Black sociology builds on critical challenges to dominant understandings and argues that the goal of a radical sociological method should be that of subversion rather than critique. To subvert the dominant requires firstly an appreciation of the ideological basis of research. The next necessary step is to present an alternative. Once we organise sociology around normative questions there is a moral obligation to answer them. This cannot be done without recourse to values and politics and a thoroughgoing critique of the mainstream. Engaging with normative questions provides insights and knowledge of society that cannot be

accessed in any other way. Invaluable lessons are also learnt from the involvement in social change; the barriers erected and the struggle to overcome the obstacles are extremely instructive in understanding the nature of a society. In order to create positive social change we need to go beyond a knowledge of practice and develop understandings produced in action derived from our political commitments.

It must also be noted that outlining that describing Western sociology as White does not have to be a criticism. More so, the description is meant as a call for a recognition of the fundamental role that Whiteness plays in the foundation and future of Western sociological theory and practice. Nowadays, it is common to here that all research is ideological but the necessary interrogation of the assumptions of conduct and knowledge produced as researchers is rarely forthcoming. The organisation of social research, the theoretical traditions and knowledge produced are all derived from the ideological commitment to the continued development and maintenance of the West. This has far reaching implications for the limits of any critically and involvement in the social world.

A Black sociology should be explicitly organised around a political ideology with the goal of social improvement. Debating the basis of such topics as racial identity formation is secondary and the question becomes 'can Blackness be used as basis of a political movement to rally people and improve the social world?'. By being practically engaged in the constructions and utilisations of Blackness, we hold the sociological theory of race up to scrutiny. This is what is meant by knowledge produced in action. That is not to say that the only legitimate knowledge is that wrought through attempts to change society. Much of the theory of a Black sociology is drawn from experience or literature. The importance is that those theoretical positions will be put to test in social action and refined (and perhaps redefined) by the process. We learn about society by attempting to change it.

Method

In practical terms the implications for a Black sociological methodology need to be outlined, and form the basis of the method of this present study. Though a fundamental challenge has been presented above to the epistemological foundation of a diverse range of research methods (indeed even the more progressive ones), it is not a case of needing to divine whole new approaches to research methods in order to conduct a Black sociology. The advances made in participatory methods can be utilised in a Black sociology, as long as the ideological basis of the research is in keeping with Black radical theory. Howard Becker's (1967) famous question of 'who's side are we on?' is more important than "which method are we using?". The critique outlined above is not meant to stand as a disavowal of action and participatory research methods that have been created in response to restrictive positivist prescriptions. Rather, it is argued that the methods themselves have merit in bringing the researcher closer to the side of the community, but the central question of ideology has been ignored. By introducing an ideological and political commitment to Black radicalism we change the nature of the relationship of the researcher to the community. In traditional research the academic is outside (and above) the subjects of study, in participatory the researcher is led by the participants and in the Black radical the academic is a political activist who works in a dialectical relationship with the community with the goal to bring about substantive change. This is not a new formulation, in that radical research has attempted to deal with the issue of the role of ideology in research. In the field of education this has been done largely through the field of ethnography.

Ethnography and education

Ethnography has been a popular research technique that has been used in the study of education for decades (Preissle & Grant, 1998; Rist, 1980). The roots of ethnographic work

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are in classical anthropological studies and the sociological study of education, with the lineages of the method found in interpretivism and symbolic interactionism (Hammersley, 1985). Ethnography involves the researcher immersing themselves in the lived experience of the community of study. Insights are gained from being both a participant and observer in the routine practice of the lives of a researched group. Preissle & Grant (1998) explain how the aim of ethnographic practice is to explore human agency in a research setting, as opposed to the focus on monolithic structures of society that are prevalent in modernist research theories. The work of ethnography looks at specific locations and tends to restrict knowledge claims to those specific sites, which in educational settings are generally classrooms. Much ethnographic work therefore is open to the criticism levelled earlier at CBR: i.e. the knowledge claims are too restricted to an individual site to be useful for widespread critique of systems. In fact, much ethnographic work, and its theoretical basis, would not only argue against the idea of systemic critique, but its aim is to avoid such dialogue (Noblit, 1984). It may, therefore, seem odd to take up the mantle of ethnography for a radical take on research that is grounded in the notion of systemic racism. However, more disconnected ethnography has been challenged by critical theorists in the creation of what is termed by Anderson (1989) 'critical ethnography'.

Anderson (1989: pg.229) recounts the debate between the critical theorists and ethnographers in education and sums up the disagreements as follows,

> Critical theorists in education have tended to view ethnographers as too atheoretical and neutral in their approach to research. Ethnographers have tended to view critical theorists as too theory driven and biased in their research

The aim of critical ethnography is to bridge the gap of structure and agency, and to use the findings of ethnographic research to inform broader structural theory. Anderson cites Willis's

(1977) study of working class children in Wolverhampton as an example of such ethnographic research. Willis's study was a neo-Marxist exploration of the role of schools in the reproduction of class positions and used the experience of the students in the school to explore how this process occurred. As Nayak (2006: pg.412) explains,

> ethnographies remain delicate cultural constructions intricately interlaced through a diverse community of tellers, listeners, writers and readers who in turn may unravel and string together these 'truth regimes' differently

By focusing on the "cultural constructions" from his particular location, the insights were used by Willis to inform overarching class theory. The need for ethnography to be atheoritcal and largely descriptive (Hammersley, 1985), is only justified by the ideological position that places the role of the academic as separate and outside of the wider community. What Willis did was to take a different ideological position, of Marxism, that places the researcher with the researched and therefore used the insights in a dialectical relationship to his own understandings of society (this has also been done in feminist research (Anderson, 1989)). This is exactly what is being proposed in a Black sociological method of ethnography; the only difference being that the ideological position is of Black radicalism.

Ideological positioning is centrally important to the usefulness of research methodologies. A method cannot be liberatory in itself, as the above discussion has demonstrated. The use of the method and the findings are vitally important. Noblit (1984: pg.96) demonstrates this with this discussion of applied research. He is at first very positive about the nature of applied research in what could almost be seen as a call to arms for a progressive applied research programme,

applied research is impatient. It does not want to wait for someone to find the results convincing; it want someone to be convinced from the outset. It is inherently political because it wishes to establish the basis of judgement for others and moreover to replace those that might otherwise be employed

However, by the end of the piece Noblit is not so optimistic when he admits that much applied research has been done by those with power and has not sought out alternatives that would lessen their grip on society. Where Noblit is precisely correct is in the political nature of research. If the political will is conservative and interested in the status quo, then this will be reflected in the research and the findings, no less so than with radical research.

Black radical politics and theory are therefore the basis of the present research. They have informed the sociological theory and also the identification and utilisation of research methods. The advantage of a Black radical frame over the Marxist is the critique of the West, and identification of Whiteness. This allows for a view of the school system as not only reproducing class inequality, but also as being inherently racist. One of the major failings of critical theory in the West has that it has been wed to mainstream institutions. Anderson (1989: pg. 257) acknowledges this limitation when he explains that,

a persistent criticism of educational critical theory is its tendency toward social critique without developing a theory of action that educational practitioners can draw upon to develop "counter-hegemonic" practice in which dominant structures of classroom and organisational meaning are challenged.

The school has consistently been the site of critical ethnography and there have been few plausible plans of action for the classroom that could allow for changes in the system presented. This should perhaps come as no surprise considering that the classroom is a site

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controlled by the school system. If the system is set to reproduce inequalities, then can we expect it to be possible for there to be serious counter hegemonic activity to develop inside these institutions? Local sites may be useful in terms of generating theory as to wider systematic issues, but it is another issue entirely to except these local sites to produce radical practice that can emanate out from within them, corrupting the entire system. Black radicalism is powerful here because it invites the creation of alternative spaces for contestation, which are embodied in this particular instance in the supplementary school movement.

A Black radical participatory ethnography

For the present study, I will be using a Black radical participatory ethnography in order to carry out the research. I have identified a more radical self-help supplementary programme, the Lumumba Saturday School, and have taught in the programme for seven months. The preceding chapters are an explication of the political and theoretical position that my experiences in the Lumumba school will be viewed from. Being actively engaged in the process of the Saturday school provided unparalleled access to and understandings of, how the Saturday school works and how Blackness is used to frame the practice and purpose of what goes on. The research is dialectical, with my understandings being informed and challenged by my experiences and discussions with people in the Lumumba school. The insights gained into the process from this very particular location can be used to interrogate and develop Black radical theory. The ideal goals are to support the Lumumba school and discover ways to support other programmes, and also to evaluate the prospects of a future Black independent education movement being located in such spaces.

I will present the bulk of my findings as an edited research diary because fieldnotes in ethnographic research are particularly important as they represent the immediate view of the

researcher (Creese et al. 2008). I conducted the study and in the diary noted the main happenings of the days and also my thoughts in relation to wider understandings. A more traditional method to writing up the findings of the ethnography could involve taking a more thematic approach to the analysis and selecting out themes and presenting evidence from the study. Due to the nature of my epistemological claims this approach would be inappropriate. When analysing interviews and focus groups I would not hesitate to use a thematic approach to try to understand participants talk. In these circumstances there is a practical issue involving the amount of data, but more importantly a thematic guide is essential when trying to interpret others interpretations of a particular issue (Smith & Osborne, 2003). This could equally apply to participant-observation, if the data being collected is meant to work as an interpretation of others interactions. Central to the methodological and epistemological basis being advanced here is that the empirical work being presented is not others' interpretations, but my interpretations of the experience and interactions with others. I stand in a dialectical relationship with the theory and practice of Black radicalism and supplementary schools. It is my insights that form the basis of the research. There is no attempt being made here to represent others, the empirical material is a representation of my experiences and views.

It is for this reason that there are no block quotes of participants meant to crudely represent their world view (Back, 2007). There were no formal interviews conducted, because I was interested in experiencing the process of Saturday school as authentically as possible and reporting the interpretations of my experiences. Inevitably, the process of being a researcher altered the interactions between me and the parents, teachers and students. However, it is my contention that this changed over the course of research, to the point where though my role may have been different to other teachers, it was a role accepted as normal within the Lumumba school. My relationship with Kamili, one of the teachers, is indicative of this. At first when the research was explained she was concerned about me 'writing things

down' and 'doing experiments' and our relationship was standoffish. However, by the end of the research I considered her a friend and we would talk comfortably about all sorts of issues. To introduce formal interviews would have restricted the development of such relationships and therefore my experiences in the Saturday school.

Using fieldnotes as the empirical data is, therefore, the correct methodological decision. The fieldnotes themselves are accounts filtered through my eyes and to thematically code and present the information neatly packaged would be to add a further filtering of the data. I am presenting the empirical material in this way to provide an understanding to the reader of what went on and how events impacted my thought process chronologically, and am also keenly aware of issues of reflexivity (Milner, 2007). This is vitally important in a dialectic piece as the research diary is a discussion with myself that is influenced by experiences and events. The presentation of the diary provides 'thick descriptions' (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) that give the reader the opportunity to see the context and understand the development of my ideas in relation to actions. There is also an attempt to submit accounts that 'theorise as they describe and describe as they theorise' (Back, 2007: pg.21), as the experiences are constantly linked back to the theory. By presenting the most complete account of my experiences it opens up my ideas to a fuller scrutiny and allows the analytical as well as political to be more seriously challenged.

Conclusion

Critiques in sociology have primarily focused on epistemological and ontological assumptions, however the Black sociological position is adopted here, which argues the fundamental level of critical analysis is that of ideology. Above has been outlined an exploration of Black sociology and the need to engage in action to produce liberatory knowledge. A Black radical participatory ethnography has been described, which was used in

order to study the potential of Black radicalism to develop in the supplementary school movement. In the following chapter, my detailed experiences of working as a teacher in the Lumumba Saturday, a longstanding self-help programme, will be presented. The succeeding chapter will entail a more traditional thematic analysis of some of the issues facing Black supplementary schools from my research experiences.

Chapter 6

The Lumumba Saturday School

We need to improve things work wise and also we learn things that we wouldn't learn in

normal schools, like Black history

Makeda[20]

Background

The Lumumba Saturday School is one of the oldest in the country, dating back to the late sixties. It was started by a group of young people in the area who wanted to help Black children to succeed in education despite endemic racial inequalities in the school system. The Saturday school is part of the Uhuru Organisation that has a commitment to Pan-Africanism that informs the ethos of the Lumumba school, which has as part of its curriculum the study of Black history and culture. The programme is what Stone (1981) would define as 'self-help'. Though it receives some nominal funds from the council, the school is not dependent on them and is therefore unaffected by changes in state priorities, unlike some other programmes in the city. A nominal fee of £2.50 per week per child, is charged for a contribution to the materials in the school so that low income families can afford to bring their children. The Lumumba Saturday School runs from ten until two thirty every Saturday in term time, and takes children of all ages, though those that attend are typically between the ages of four and twelve. It was selected as the site for the research because of the radical nature of the Uhuru organisation. The aim of the research is to investigate whether Black supplementary schools present the possibility of producing Black radical independent education and therefore a school with the ethos of Lumumba is an ideal example for study.

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[20] Twelve year old female student at the Lumumba School

The research is not concerned with charting the development of Black supplementary schooling, nor a critique of mainstream educational policy and practice. Such work is vitally important, and my Masters thesis entered into an historical analysis of Black supplementary education, situated within a Black radical critique of the school system (Andrews, 2007). Much more development of this work is needed, however it lies outside of the remit of the present study. As such, presented below is not a detailed analysis of pedagogy or Black alternative education. The aim is not an investigation of Black supplementary schooling per se, but rather a detailed exploration of the Lumumba school as potential site for an emergent Black radicalism embodied in Black independent education. Therefore, throughout the research diary I have presented my experiences in the Lumumba school and attempted to relate them back to the wider theory on Black radicalism outlined in the earlier chapters.

The Research Process

In order to carry out a Black radical participatory ethnography I volunteered as a teacher in the Lumumba school for seven months. I became part of the functioning of the school and had the opportunity to interact with other volunteer teachers, students and parents. During my time in the project I also spent some time within the Uhuru Organisation. These experiences are not systematically documented, however, they are drawn upon particularly in the discussion of Kwanzaa and the cultural nationalism of Uhuru. My experiences and how I relate them back into the theory of Black radicalism and independent education form the basis of the empirical material presented.

The participants in the research were the students and staff at the project, along with the parents. All participants have been given pseudonyms in order to provide anonymity. There were no inducements offered to participants in the research process, however I did donate £250 of my research grant to the Lumumba School. The purpose of the donation was

not to gain access, as I am sure this would have been granted regardless of the money. My aim from the beginning was to do research that could benefit the community, and the Lumumba School in particular, and making a donation was the most concrete and irrefutable way to have an impact.

The following is an account of my seven months volunteering as a teacher in the Lumumba school.

Research Diary

Meeting to set up my involvement 2.12.08

Based on previous experiences with people in the Uhuru organisation I was slightly apprehensive about the initial meeting to request to set up the research project. At one event I attended I was explaining my Masters research to one of the elders in the organisation and he accused me of being a spy for the White man because of my attachment to a university. There was a high degree of suspicion about my motives and intentions because of my role as a researcher. It is unsurprising that some people take the view of seeing academics as agents of the state, given the history of sociology in pathologising Black communities (West, 1993). These concerns are particularly relevant to organisations that lie outside, and challenge the remit of the state. Self-help projects have good reason to be wary of authorities who may wish to shut them down.

It was against this backdrop that I approached Menelik, who runs the Uhuru Organisation, about the proposed research. Having spoken to him in the past I knew that he would be receptive to research, but the idea of actually collecting information whilst teaching in the programme, I anticipated may be problematic. I was careful to explain that I wanted to help the project and work as a teacher primarily, as well as to use the Saturday school as a case study for Black independent education. We spoke for about half an hour and he was very

receptive to the idea. My first lesson on reflexivity came from this meeting. My experience of Menelik had been that he was open to research, in fact he had previously talked to me about the number of people who came to him for interviews. I have even met people at the university who had been given access to the organisation before, who I would not have imagined would have been welcome. However, all this experience was overridden by the idea that a Pan-African organisation would somehow not be open to the idea of in depth university research.

It is assumed in some of the writing about Saturday schools that self-help organisations are closed to state because they prefer to be accountable to no one (Stone, 1981). The issue of being wary of the state and its agents is not about wanting to be unaccountable, but to maintain independence. Menelik was open to listening to the idea of research, and when I explained the motives behind it and my desire to help I was welcomed into the Saturday school. I should not have expected any less.

First Saturday school experience 6.12.08

My elder sister and I had been discussing going to help out at the Lumumba school for a few weeks. We were not really sure what to expect from the programme. We went and looked for Menelik, but he was not there so we were lead up to the school by a parent who was also a teacher.

When we got upstairs the assistants were glad for our offer of help. We had never met any of them before so we introduced ourselves, said that we wanted to help and took it from there. The Saturday school takes place in one room upstairs, with the students sharing the space. There were eleven students there in total and three other assistants apart from ourselves. I was surprised by the set up based on my prior knowledge of the programme. There did not seem to be much connection with the rest of the organisation. The room was up

a long flight of stairs and self contained with a bathroom and all the supplies in the same room.

I had expected a very well structured and regimented programme of learning, however, there was no one seemingly in charge. We discovered that the person who had been running the school had recently left. A volunteer named John had stepped in to take charge and handed out the work to the students. We were introduced to the children, but beyond that were left to engage how we felt best. There was no discernible structure with the students of a variety of different ages and skill levels all sitting around one table, doing different pieces of school curriculum work.

The room was not very big, but was covered in posters of Black pride and history, displaying pictures of Africa and Black heroes. There were also a lot of books, not only about Black history but also textbooks and they had photocopies of worksheets from school curriculum materials that they used. There were a lot of potential resources to use for teaching both Black history and culture and also for supporting the work that went on in the mainstream schools.

Most of the students were young children, under the age of ten. There was one student who was significantly older than the others, a fourteen year old boy named Warren. He was sitting in the corner of the room alone on his phone while the other kids at the table were doing work. I decided to spend my time talking to Warren and so I introduced myself to him and tried to get him to tell me about the work he did at his mainstream school. We talked about the maths work and the science he was doing. I spent about an hour and half working with him and he went into some detail explaining the work he was doing in school about forces in physics and I got him to draw a diagram of how force interacts with materials. He was engaged in the conversation and this first experience of teaching in Saturday school

highlighted one of the key strengths of but also one of the major weaknesses of some programmes.

Our long conversation demonstrated the power of relationships being developed that could be more difficult in the mainstream school setting. I was able to sit down and chat with him about a variety of issues and build into it school work by getting him to explain things to me and then encouraging and correcting him if necessary. This kind of one to one discussion may not be possible in a mainstream school and the building of relationships is important in terms of students being committed to institutions (Klem & Connell, 2004). However, it is not entirely clear that our conversation benefited Warren and resulted from a lack of structure and work for him to do. Would he have been better served with a more traditional pedagogy, with set work and assistance? I told him to bring some work for next week that we could discuss, in the hope that we could be more productive in terms of studying. Also our conversation, however beneficial, was only possibly because of the small number of students, allowing me to spend so much time with him. Clearly, if Saturday schools were to have a major effect on schooling then larger numbers would be needed to attend, therefore distilling the possibility of one to one support.

In addition to John teaching there was a secondary school teaching assistant, Lorraine, who was the parent of two students in the room and a female university student, Kamili. I broached the idea of the research and providing some money for the project and they were all very receptive to the prospect.

Me and my sister had to leave early, so left when they started to have lunch and promised to come back the next week. My sister and I discussed how the school needed more structured activity after we left. That was the overriding impression of the first day and we talked about potentially separating out the children into age ranges and trying some focused activities. We also thought that it may be beneficial to have some sort of rota for teaching so

that everyone did not have to work the full four hours every Saturday. Without even spending one full day at the school we could anticipate the pressures of volunteering every week.

13.12.08

This time we were running a little late and got to the Lumumba school at eleven. There was only one of the teachers from last week, Kamili, and a helper from the Uhuru organisation called Luke. Again, there were eleven students in attendance all together throughout the day.

I started off the day helping out a couple of seven year old students, Shakayna and Mark, with English. They were working through the pages of a textbook of mainsream curricular material. Though they were the same age, the girl was much more advanced than the boy. I also spent some time helping, Tobias, aged five, with Mathematics. Some of the morning I spent with Vusi, an intelligent eleven year old who needed more work to do because he is found it unchallenging and got bored. This part of the day seemed a lot more structured than last week. There were three tables and children of different ages were split across them with different sets of work. What was impressed upon me from my earliest experiences of Saturday school was that there was a strong focus on basic skills and work that would be found in mainstream schools. In this project, that is strongly about self-help and run by an organisation concerned with Blackness and African culture, the ideas of success in mainstream schools were neither secondary, nor lost. The whole morning, up until lunchtime was dedicated to standard curriculum work.

Lunchtime came and the children got out their packed lunches. My sister noticed that they were not particularly healthy and has commented on this to me numerous times since. During lunch the younger children got restless and started acting up. This is not entirely surprising given that everything is held in the one relatively small room. The older students

played Connect 4, which would become a fixture of lunchtime and also a central part of my interaction with them.

My sister and I had a good interaction with Makeda, an eleven year old girl, when we were asking her to explain the planets in the solar system. She took pride in reciting the names and talking about the differences she had learnt about at school. As with Warren, last week, this is attention that the students would not necessarily receive in mainstream schools.

After lunch we all sat in one group and Kamili taught the class and lead a discussion about Kwanzaa, the Pan-African celebration that takes place the day after Christmas (see Chapter Three). Everyone sat in a circle as she took them through the principles of Kwanzaa which include unity, self-determination, collective responsibility, cooperative economics, purpose, creativity and faith. Kamili went through all the different principles and tried to explain what they all mean. The colours of Kwanzaa are the Pan-African colours of Red, to represent the bloodshed throughout our history; Black, for the colour of the people; and Green, for the land of Africa. Some of the older children had knowledge of what the colours represent. The Red, Black and Green flag is a strong symbol of Pan-Africanism popularised by Marcus Garvey, so it is perhaps not surprising that the students had an awareness of the colours, as they spoke about seeing them before at home or at events. The ceremony is all about Black people in the West acknowledging and embracing their Africaness, and Kamili spent a lot of time emphasising this point with the class.

The message of Africaness was not embraced by all the students, at first. At one point Kamili went around the circle asking people if they were African, to which more than one replied 'No, I'm Jamaican' and Labraya answered 'No, I'm from the Cotswolds'. Kamili made the effort to link all the people in the room to Africa by briefly going over the history of enslavement and explaining Blackness. For some of the younger ones enslavement was not something that they had encountered before and they seemed genuinely confused by the idea.

Though enslavement is obviously a delicate subject it seems that it should form part of the basic education for all Black children given its importance. This is where Saturday schools can have a very marked difference to mainstream school. A Eurocentric curriculum is a common critique of schools (Figueroa, 1991), and programmes such as these can address this issue. I made a note to run a session in the Saturday school about enslavement after seeing the look of confusion on some of the students faces when it was bought up.

Eventually, all the students appeared to get the message and learn something. Mostly, throughout the Kamili teachings the students were attentive and interested, though some of the younger ones were misbehaving. There were definitely discipline issues with Tobias, a five year old boy, who was not paying any attention and was at times swinging his legs about and making noise. Kamili did her best to keep him in line, raising her voice and explaining to him why he was wrong. My sister ended up having to sit with him to keep him in check.

One of the distinct advantages of Saturday schools already mentioned is the relationships that can be formed between student and teacher. This was highlighted on this day in the personal stories and experiences that were bought into the lesson by Kamili. When talking about the concept of pride in Blackness and self-determination, she brought up how they had helped her to succeed in school and stay on the right path. She was being heartfelt and honest and this appeared to strike a chord with the students. Patricia Hill Collins (2000: pg.265) talks about the 'Ethic of Personal Accountability' when outlining her Back feminist epistemology, arguing that the conviction and the sincerity of the speaker is central to who is trusted in the Black community. I could see this concept at work as Kamili was explaining the principles of Kwanzaa, from her own experiences. I was also able to use my experience when talking about being determined to read the *Autobiography of Malcolm X* at a young age. By engaging ourselves in a personal discussion, it allowed the students to talk to us about

their experiences. Such conversations were important to building the distinct relationships at the heart of the programme.

After the talk and discussion there was an exercise where the students had to answer questions about Kwanzaa and colour in a picture. This activity went well and got the children to remember the information and also to practice their writing skills. Even with the Black centred teaching there was always an effort made to get the students to use skills necessary for success in mainstream schools and life in general. The students were engaged in the task and when they finished we listened to a Kwanzaa song. One girl, Sharama aged four, enjoyed it so much she didn't want to leave and had a tantrum when her parent came for her.

Kamili's interaction with the parents was very good. She talked to all of them about the sessions and how their children behaved. She also had a discussion about Kwanzaa and Blackness with the parents. Makeda's mother quizzed her daughter 'what nationality are you?' to which she replied 'African'. After we had left my sister took offence to this conversation. She was keen to affirm her Britishness and therefore did not like the negative references to the British flag made in the class. For her there is a problem of Black people not associating with Britishness and she believes this is holding Black people back. She argued that it ultimately leads to low self esteem and seeing ourselves as second-class citizens. The idea of not participating in Babylon system, and seeing ourselves not as citizens is problematic for my sister. She believes that we need to engage in society and see ourselves as equally deserving of the chances that are available. Whilst I agreed with her to a point on the issue of claiming Britishness I disagreed on the issue of self-esteem.

One of the fundamental problems with Black radical theory is that it is seen as being something that argues we should not engage in mainstream society. People are afraid of the idea of separation, and I would argue that this is one of the main reasons that the Black liberal has more purchase than the radical. Though there have been many calls for the kind of

separatism that removes us fully from White society, the more fully developed Black radical position is one which moves away from separation to, as Malcolm X (1971: pg.9), terms 'independence'. We need to be able to have, relatively, independent Black organisations that tie back into mainstream society. So whilst yes we are British, we need to affirm that we are Black British and need our own institutions like the Lumumba Saturday School.

In terms of Black pride, the "reject Britain, embrace Africa" ideal is meant primarily as a source for self-esteem for Black people. When you walk into the Saturday school one of the first things you see is a big sign that reads Garvey's slogan 'the Black skin is not a symbol of shame, but rather a glorious symbol of greatness'. By embracing Africa, and Blackness, what the Black radical position attempts to do is reverse the negative associations of Blackness and instil pride in Black people by connecting to their Blackness. This is the power of the Diaspora for Black radicalism and extends across national boundaries. Of all the successes of Black radicalism, it is perhaps this pride in Blackness which stands out the most. The anti-British rhetoric taught in the school may have been a bit dated, and even unhelpful, but the accusation of causing low self-esteem does not hold. My sister is more liberal than myself and argues that the desired state for Black people in the country is to have a proliferation of choices and therefore not to be consigned to discrimination based on race. The Black radical argument is that the desired state is Pan-Africanism in the British context, i.e. a Black independent community that is part of Britain and the wider Pan-African movement.

26.12.08

During the Kwanzaa session, in the previous Saturday school day, Kamili told me about a celebration that Uhuru was putting on for the event. The Kwanzaa focus was timely because I was just writing the section of my thesis criticising the festival as cultural

nationalism, which appears in Chapter Three. Some of the principles are interesting and helpful but I often fail to see how they are tied to practical action. Black pride is useless without Black activism and the two are not mutually inclusive. With this in mind I decided to go to the Kwanzaa event and invited an elder from the community who I knew well, Henry, to come with me.

Henry was involved at the very beginning of Uhuru and also in founding the Lumumba Saturday School. However, he became less involved with the organisation years ago because of the direction of cultural nationalism that he saw it taking. We have had discussions in the past about the relative merits of the spirituality dimension of Pan-Africanism, with Henry explaining how in the past people in the organisation would have been heavily against the idea of cultural nationalism. From Henry's account the battle lines drawn between Karenga's cultural nationalists and Newton's Black Panthers in the USA in the seventies (see Chapter Three), were keenly felt in the UK and the Uhuru fell strongly on the side of the Black Panthers. 'We had no time for that cultural nationalism' as he put it. Having his perspective on the Kwanzaa event was therefore very insightful.

Before going to pick up Henry to go the event I selected a Malcolm X t-shirt to wear as a suitably political statement. When I got to Henry's house, however, he had different ideas about appropriate clothing. He was dressed in a smart looking African top and he had dug out from his wardrobe a full length Dashiki for me to wear. It was white with gold trim and far too big for me. Due to the Africaness of the organisation he didn't want to feel out of place wearing European clothes. I had considered this before but figured the Malcolm X top would suffice. Henry didn't agree, so I had to put on the very large Dashiki. From the outset we had very clear expectations from the event.

When we turned up, however, I felt pretty silly in my African dress. There were a number of people in Dashiki's but mostly people were dressed in standard British clothes.

Henry was alright with his neatly fitting African top, I had to glide into the venue due to the sheer size of my outfit. To be fair, no one stared or said anything, the Dashiki was received as not out of the ordinary. Our first assumption about the organisation and the event was incorrect. There was certainly no non-acceptance of non-African wear and there were even women with their hair in weaves. One of my female friends had refused to come with us because she was sure that someone would 'cuss' her for not having a natural hairstyle. This is a big issue around authenticity and women in the Black community (Byrd & Tarps, 2001).

Proceedings opened with the pouring of libation, led by Menelik, who sanctified the meeting hall with rum and prayers to the ancestors. At one point a cup of water went round and everyone was splashed with some to signify unity and to bless the ancestors. There was African drumming and dancing, along with poems read in Patois as well and English on the message of Black pride. The principles of Kwanzaa were also recounted by various different speakers. In addition, there were performances from local singers of various popular songs. The completely closed African event expected, was not what was delivered. Instead there was a heavily African and Caribbean focused programme with the themes of Black pride and community that encouraged people to be involved, with dancing and singing that also paid respect to those who had gone before and the elders present in the room (including Henry).

We also had a singing of the Kwanzaa song, that we had learnt in Saturday school, by two of the students Makeda and Caleb. Afterwards I spoke to them, and their mother, and have seen them at a few events in the community and bumped into them in the street. Again the theme of relationships comes up here. A local community organised Saturday school draws in people from the area and you therefore do not only see students in the school environment, but get to know them and their families. One of the key complaints about middle class teachers in mainstream schools is that they are being bussed into an area they do not know, to teach students they do not understand (Kunjufu, 2002). This is overcome by the

community aspect of Saturday schools. In the case of the Lumumba School it is increasingly potent because of the links to the wider organisation that holds events in the local community.

When me and Henry left the Kwanzaa event the conversation had stopped being about the limits of cultural nationalism and the restrictions of African cultural movements, and turned to how positive the Kwanzaa event was. We were now much more interested in how you could use events like the Kwanzaa celebration to bring in more members of the community and also to then tie into a programme for political action. Celebrating Kwanzaa may not be enough, but perhaps it can be a starting point from which to launch community action.

17.1.09

In the first session of Saturday school since Christmas there were ten children. In the morning we spent the usual time going through schoolwork and worksheets from textbooks.

Kamili was on her own when I got there. The other people who we met on the first day seemed to have left. Kamili explained that John would not be coming back. She was happy about this as the two of them did not get along. Relationships with the staff in voluntary projects such as the Lumumba Saturday School are equally as important as those with the students. Unlike in the mainstream schools people are not being paid to do a job and therefore if there are personal difficulties between staff members then people may well decide to leave.

I had to leave early as it was my grandmother's birthday. On the way out I saw Menelik who told me about the problems with the Pamoja organisation. Pamoja was started by Henry and others in the seventies to deal with the problems of homelessness, education and legal advice for the community. In recent years they had fallen into difficulty and apparently amassed over £300,000 of debt. Menelik was trying to get in contact with Henry

to see if there was any way his organisation could absorb the debt of Pamoja and to keep the community buildings that the organisation had acquired over the years.

24.1.09

There were eight students at the Saturday school when I arrived. We again went through some standard worksheets with the different age groups, trying to get them to focus on learning the basics. I helped students get to grips with numbers as well as teaching some of the younger ones to form letters. This was an opportunity for them to get one on one time and attention and it also allowed them to practice and reinforce what they were doing in mainstream schools.

At lunchtime my sister and I ate and chatted and then played a game much like Ludo with some of the older kids. It was fun and again a chance to build relationships with the students.

I had a chance to speak to Kamili a little bit more about the research. As we were talking she asked 'are you going to do experiments?'. Part of the problem with sociology is the closed off nature of research that then gives it a somewhat mythic quality to the public. If research is seen to be carried out by researchers wearing lab coats and doing experiments then no wonder there is a level of suspicion within some sections of the public. It was therefore very important for me to clarify what was entailed in the research. I again explained the basis of the research and that I was there to be a part of the programme and learn from what I saw. In the conversation she also brought up the questions of 'do you write down what you did when you go home?', and asked it with a level of hesitancy. I told her that I did keep a diary and would be publishing it as part of my research and that she was free to withdraw from the research at any time. One of the major ethical concerns of the project arose here because we had to discuss how she could withdraw without no longer teaching in the

programme, or me ceasing to do the research. I explained that if people did not want to participate they would not be mentioned nor quoted in the research diary. After the discussion Kamili was happy about the research and for herself to be included.

In the afternoon one of the parents, Kemi, came in and did a talk about Marcus Garvey. We sat all the students round in a circle and had she explained about Garvey's life. In doing this though she also bought in a lot of questions like 'do you know about slavery?', 'do you know where your parents are from?'. Interestingly all the children were aware of their Caribbean descent, with most of them having family in Jamaica. The students were keen to learn and very attentive as she explained and they all wanted to answer the questions. There was a lot of enthusiasm in the room about the question of the students' heritage. She also stressed the importance of pride as Black people and not listening when we are being told we cannot do things and cannot achieve.

After Kemi had spoken to them we had them do a worksheet asking five questions about Marcus Garvey. The whole time it was very interactive. Kemi asked them the questions as group and had the students put their hands up to answer, the class then had to write down the answers. In dealing with the different age groups, the younger students were on different tables and the other teachers helped them to spell out words that they found difficult. The students had a lot of fun and were all eager to be involved. They also all seemed to retain the information well, especially the older ones. When they had finished writing they coloured in the sheet. A couple of parents came in before we had finished and sat and listened to and saw what we did with the students. They joined in asking the children questions about their heritage and also filling in information about Marcus Garvey. This reinforcement by the parents was good to see, giving them a space to participate in their children's learning.

After Saturday school was over Kamili, Kemi and myself talked about doing the Black history lessons every week in the afternoon. Kemi said she would prepare some

materials and come in and run them. She is training to become a teacher and was excellent with the students. I explained the research to her again, after initially having given her a consent form, and also explained about the money for the Saturday school as part of the project. When explaining the research to staff the money was always the aspect that brought the most excitement. This perhaps raises ethical concerns, however, it is not as though there were objections before the money issue was raised. During the conversation I also explained about the Black History booklet that I had made as an undergraduate and other materials I had used before for teaching.

I again saw Menelik and he brought up the organisation Pamoja. He was trying to get in touch with Henry, who used to run the project. The Pamoja story would become more prominent later on.

31.1.09

When I arrived at Saturday school there were eight students. In the morning I helped out with some Maths, and also helped out a new girl, Natasha aged five, with her homework. She had to write out sentences with the correct punctuation. There was a sheet for her to do it on but it did not have much space on it. At first I thought maybe it would all fit, but then I was not so sure. The problem was that my attention was taken away from her by having to devote a lot of time to Mark in helping him with his tens, hundreds and units. He eventually understood but he needed you to go over things with him a number of times for them to stick. So we went through his work and he did it well in the end. This is again an example of the benefits of one to attention, however, it meant I was not focused on Natasha's work, who really needed to do her homework on a separate sheet of paper for it to all fit. I eventually got round to making her do it on a separate sheet, but it was not the best use of her time that she had to do the same thing twice.

There are two issues that this story raises. One was the need for me to be firmer earlier on with her. When I thought she needed a new sheet I should just have told to get one, instead of letting her carry on. Perhaps, a downside to volunteers teaching can at times be the lack of teacher training. Secondly, is the issue of staffing. It was me and Kamili alone in the room and whilst there were only eight students, a situation that most classrooms would relish, they were of differing abilities and age ranges. In this situation, when there is no set class, you need to give a lot of individual attention to the different age and ability groups. On the one hand it might seem like overkill to have any more adults in the room, in this situation it could have helped.

Over lunch the students were pretty quiet and getting on with each other quite well. After eating their food they seemed to get a sugar rush and started running around the classroom. I had to use the age old technique of counting to ten to get them to sit down and be quiet. Kamili spoke to them firmly about respect and listening and had them all help to clean up the room. They needed this and they all obeyed without protest. On the disciplinary front, I had to talk to Tobias as usual about running and had to sit him in time out and get him to apologise for calling someone fat lips. Tobias is five years old and only just started going to school. He seemed to be getting a little bit better but still needed a lot of attention. I also had to talk to his brother Mark about him bugging one of the older children, Vusi. Brianne, aged twelve, and a lot of the older students were not particularly into their work and got bored.

In the afternoon Kemi came in to talk about Queen Nzinga (though she pronounced her name wrong and I did not want to undermine her). Before this I had spoken to Kamili about the Black History booklet I had put together as an undergraduate and I took a copy in. She was impressed and thought we would be able to use it, maybe going through a different person each week.

Before Kemi came in we had the children sit in a circle. I was with them and so asked them the questions about Marcus Garvey from the week before. Again, they were all very attentive and remembered quite a lot. I also asked them why it was important to learn about Black history and what they knew. It was a lively discussion and they all felt it was important to know about their heritage. Then Kamili came in and using the booklet I had bought in and told them some information about Queen Nzinga, as a preamble to Kemi. Before this she went round the circle and asked the children why they thought it was important to come to Saturday school and why it was important to behave when there. Answers included, 'we have to have respect', 'need to practice what we do in school', 'we will be ahead of the other kids' and 'if you don't then you won't be able to write'. Some of the older students answered that it was 'important to learn' and that 'we need to behave so we can concentrate on work'. The majority of the answers were about how they could improve their schoolwork and advance in mainstream classrooms. Makeda answered that 'we need to improve things work wise and also we learn things that we wouldn't learn in normal schools, like Black history'. This shows that the students are also aware of the Black history element and the importance of it in the Saturday school. I stressed the importance of concentrating on work, getting practice and emphasised learning about things we would not usually in mainstream schools. Kamili then stressed that behaviour was important both in and out of the school because they did not want to become criminals, and they needed to have respect and learn things to be ahead of the other children. It was quite an impassioned talk from Kamili, drawing on the negative stereotypes of Black people to say that we did not want the children to turn into the image of them that is portrayed in the media. It was clearly important to her and the students listened intently. It again bought up ideas of Collins's (2000: pg.265) 'ethic of personal accountability'. Our voices are heard when people believe we mean our words. This kind of guttural sincerity is encouraged in the close knit venue of the Lumumba Saturday School.

Kemi then came in and talked about Queen Nzinga, from notes she had prepared. She explained about colonialism in African and again talked about enslavement. Queen Nzinga was queen of Angola in the middle of the last century and fought off the colonial advances of the Portuguese until her death. She really tied the story into the self-esteem message that had been strongly portrayed in Saturday school for a few weeks. The central theme being that we can do whatever we set out to achieve and not to let anyone hold us back. Queen Nzinga was used primarily as a vehicle for this message, though the historical angle of course was there. Queen Nzinga achieved when the odds were against her and so can all the students. Kemi also talked about achievement and went round the circle asking if the students had any achievements and we clapped as people told of their victories. The students were really engaged and all eager to speak up.

There was another worksheet for them to do, which we filled out in the same format as last week. Again the students got into it and did pretty well, with the older ones even remembering the African names of the people in the story of Queen Nzinga (something that I must admit I could not achieve). It also turns out that putting the worksheets and presentations together was a family affair. Caleb, Makeda, Kemi and her sister all chipped in to find the information and present it. As teachers, we talked about what to do for next week, and decided to look at Africa as a continent and I volunteered to print out individual ancient African pictures to show the students. We also agreed to go into Saturday school on the Thursday of half term and decorate the room and talk about plans for the future of the project.

Whilst Kemi was talking up the self-esteem angle it made me think of the relatively negative tone that Black radicalism can sometimes come across in, by stressing the inequalities and the racism in the system. This is a theme that comes up a lot in discussions with people in the community. The question becomes that if we say we say the system is holding us back and all of us really cannot make it, are we being too negative and

encouraging people to give up and opt out entirely? My argument in response to this is always that the Black radical position is not that things are hopeless or that we cannot achieve. Black radicalism argues that structural racism is the issue and unless we end this we cannot all succeed. We can succeed, we can achieve, we can defeat structural racism, but only if we come together as Black people to create our own institutions and force mainstream society, not to accept us, or accommodate us but to fundamentally change to *include* us. It is neither negative nor defeatist, but a form of radical optimism. To do this, however, takes more than pride in oneself but the commitment to a programme of independent Black action.

7.2.09

There were ten students present when I arrived. I sat with the younger ones and helped them with their work, which was mostly Mathematics. I helped Natasha, aged five, with her counting. She was having difficulty with the bigger numbers so I got out an abacus and showed her how to use it. From then on she was fine and answered all of the questions on her worksheet correctly. I also helped Mark, who suffers from a lack of concentration. We were doing Mathematics and he got through it in the end. Caleb did his times tables very well but rushed them a bit to be honest. The older students needed help with their work as well, which they completed. The close attention of Kamili and myself definitely helped.

At lunch time I wondered around and chatted with the children while they ate. Labraya, who is seven, had a mobile phone that was actually bigger than her hand. We discussed why she would need a phone at her age. She said she needed to call people, mostly her mom. I also chatted to Kamili, about nothing much really, phones, going out, old times. Relationships between staff are very important to the functioning of the programme. As I mentioned before Kamili did not get on with John and he ended up leaving.

In the afternoon Kemi came and spoke about Ancient Africa. I had printed off a poster with some information on it, which we gave to the students to take home. We sat in a circle and she read some material from the internet about the ancient kingdoms and spoke of Kemet. Some of the material was not well researched or accurate. She also talked about the kingdoms that spread across Africa in the olden days and how people used to dress and also what the Europeans came to take away: people and materials. I added some information about how they had so much gold in Ghana that they used it to make furniture, pre enslavement (Jackson, 1970). We felt it important to teach about the ancient origins of Africa because the tendency is for our history to be represented as beginning once being enslaved. Caleb, however, focused on the issues of enslavement and tied the topic to racism in the UK. When asked about the importance of learning about ancient Africa he said 'because we as Black people can't get jobs in Britain'. It is ironic here, given our previously stated aim, that we again talked about the legacy of enslavement in order to tie the movement of people into the narrative of Africa. It is relatively impossible to connect ancient Africa into the modern day without addressing the topic of slavery. Kemi showed them a map of Africa so that they could get an idea of what the continent looked like and also to turn the discussion back to the continent of Africa and life there before slavery.

We had the students do a sheet asking questions about Africa after we had finished the discussion. They all again seemed to pay attention and to get something out of the session, especially the older ones who could understand more.

At the end of the session, Kemi, her sister, Kamili and I were left talking. We spoke about the problems facing people getting jobs in terms of not knowing how to behave at interview. What was obvious from this conversation was the extent to which concepts within academia are used in the world, minus the technical language. The discussion was one that focused on the importance of cultural capital when going for a job interview and also the

ability necessary for people to 'code switch' between different cultural capitals for different settings (Ladson-Billings, 1995). As Kamili put it, 'you've got to know how to act where and when'.

We spoke with Vusi's dad about nutrition too, and about eating the best fruit etc, and avoiding carcinogens. Nutrition is a big part of spiritual Pan-Africanism. It follows the self-help ideal of pride in oneself: if we look after our bodies and minds we can find spiritual freedom and redemption. There was a funny moment when we were talking about Bulla Cake (a Jamaican bun) and my pronunciation made him laugh, because you can only say it in an accent. Vusi's dad is very concerned about his son's education and wanted rigorous teaching in the Saturday school.

Caleb and Makeda were hanging around and we had a chat. Caleb changed schools to a predominantly White school and is apparently having a lot of trouble being one of only four Black kids in his year and is always fighting. I gave him the old-school rules: no attacking people but if you are hit then defend yourself. Makeda does Karate, and Caleb likes boxing. Some kind of physical activity could be good to introduce to the kids, especially a martial art or boxing because it teaches discipline and concentration (however, it may also encourage them to fight).

Downstairs we talked to Menelik for a while, and got some proper griotology from the elder. He was talking about the big snow in 1963. Caleb got bored listening to Menelik, he does not like sitting around. Makeda mentioned the idea of doing a time capsule.

14.2.09

I arrived late, at one-thirty. There were only four students having lunch when I got to Saturday school. They were making a lot of noise and a whole lot of mess. There was only Chris with them when I got there. Chris is part of the Uhuru organisation and helps out

sometimes. He has a disability that prevents him from walking well, so it may be that the children were taking advantage. Sharama and Jermaine (four and five, respectively) were being especially bad. I had to tell them off and calm them down. They are not generally bad, on this day they just seemed restless. One of the problems with the Saturday school is that it is all held in one room and there is really nowhere to go for the students to stretch or get some fresh air. This is really is something that needs to be addressed.

I missed the work in the morning but Kamili had them do some writing about what happened in the snow we had the week before. Because it was half term we just had play time in the afternoon. I played Connect4 and also read Sharama a book.

I spent a bit of time with Sharama because her mom was late. It turns out that she was home schooled. I was not surprised to hear this as it explained some of her behaviour, like being very quick to go into her shell with other children. One of the benefits of the Saturday programme for her is the chance to mix with other children her own age.

19.2.09

I went to the Uhuru building to meet Kemi and Kamili to discuss Saturday school. Kamili was late so me and Kemi had a chat. We talked about some of the reasons why the popularity of Saturday school was declining. For the Lumumba school she felt that the state of the building was one thing that deterred people from coming in. She felt that if there were better facilities then parents would be more likely to bring their kids to the school. Kemi also complained that people never liked to get involved in the community until something really bad happened. For her it all revolves around crisis: if there is a crisis then there is a meeting but not until then. She gave the local example of the city council threatening to take over certain long held (and long empty) community buildings. This had bought people out to organise and protest, but when the buildings were safe and vacant no one had anything to say.

On a day to day level no one wants to get involved and do what is necessary. Kemi also gave me a leaflet for the National Black Supplementary School Organisation. A key problem in the movement has been lack of coordination and organisation between projects. The existence of a national body is an important step.

Kamili came and we discussed what we needed for the school. Some equipment items were suggested and I said I would go down to Staples to get a catalogue so we could look for a bookcase. Kamili had her say on why she thought there were less students than in the past at the school. She thought it had a lot to do with children having a big variety of activities now, like dance classes to do, that could keep them away. In the past there was little competition to Saturday schools for places where parents could leave their children. Now there are a number of different options, that children may find more inviting than extra schooling on the weekend.

28.2.09

I arrived at Saturday school and there were eight students there. I had to find Vusi some work to do for Maths. There are a lot of books in the classroom, but few relevant for the older students and I found it very difficult to find the appropriate age ranges and subjects. I asked him what he needed to practice and he told me he needed to work on his fractions. I found him a worksheet and he flew through it, as usual. He could not work out how to find twenty percent of a number so I talked him through it, using the simplest method I know: work out ten percent and multiply it by two. This being too easy for him he wanted know how to work out sixty-seven percent of a number. Again I told him he had to break it down into percentages he could work out. Ten percent and time it by six and then 1 percent and times it by seven. He worked that out easily so I challenged him and picked a four figure number to work out a percentage of. Vusi did all the working out but it did not come to the

right figure. In retrospect it might have been too much of a challenge. We went through the working out and we go the right number in the end. It was good to see that something had finally challenged him in Saturday school. When his dad came to pick him up I was sure to tell him of the good work that Vusi had done, and how difficult the task set for him was.

We were to have a Rastafarian teacher come in for the afternoon session, so whilst we were waiting after lunch we got out a big drum and had a few children gathered round. We tried to teach them about the significance of the drum throughout Black history - how the drum was used in Africa to communicate between villages and then later in enslavement to point people to freedom. To be honest they were more interested in banging on it. Labraya was actually really very good and came out with some complex beats. She is eight years old and her brother plays the African drums. The presence of the African drum speaks to one of the benefits of the connection of Lumumba school to the wider Uhuru organisation. The drum belongs to the organisation who use it for various events and having such items around allows for spontaneous teaching. In the classroom there is also a huge picture of one of the early community events of the seventies where there are thousands of Black people gathered in a local park. The students asked about the picture and we were able to explain about the history of the resistance of Black people in the community and reinforce the message of Black pride that is central to everything the organisation does, including the Saturday school.

In the afternoon a Rastafarian lady named Ifrika came to talk about Marcus Garvey, to reinforce what we had talked about a couple of weeks ago. She got the children to sit round the table whilst she told them some information and asked what they could remember from the last time. Ifrika came from a local project and bought some other Rastafarians with her to watch the lesson. Their organisation was running a competition for children to enter by doing some art about Marcus Garvey. They wanted to take pictures and video the lesson, which Kamili took exception because of needing to get consent from the parents. This went back

and forth for a while until they agreed to only take pictures of Kemi's children, as she was in the room.

After Ifika had told them about Marcus Garvey she had them do word searches, which we helped them to fill out, and also to colour in a picture of Garvey. In truth, the information she had was printed from the internet and she did not seem to have a depth of knowledge on the subject. I helped Jermaine with his word search, as he is the youngest, aged four. I am not sure how much of the Black history lessons the younger ones take in, they may have benefited from storytelling.

At the end of the session Kamili, Kemi and I stayed behind to have a meeting about the Saturday school and what to do with the money from the research. We made a list of things including books, a bookcase, pens and paper. They also wanted to organise a trip to either the Slavery Museum in Liverpool or the Empire Museum in Bristol. I also agreed to teach about Nanny and enslavement in the next Saturday school session. The topic of enslavement was very important because it kept arising but it was not clear whether all of the children understood what was meant by it.

7.3.09

I arrived pretty late because I was printing out the resources for teaching about Nanny in the afternoon. When I got there I was helping out Labraya and Tamika, who are cousins, with compound words. I also helped Sharama with her handwriting. She was having difficulties writing her b's and d's. I told her a better technique (she was starting them in the wrong place) and she rapidly improved. It was a great experience to see her develop because of the advice I gave her.

After lunch it was my turn to teach about Nanny of the Maroons and the slave trade. I used a map of the world and some pictures of various parts of the slave trade to talk about

enslavement. The pictures I chose were of a gun, African civilisation, enslavement, the middle passage, a plantation, sugar and an English lady with some tea. My aim was to guide them through the history of enslavement using the map. I had them sit around in a circle as I explained and got them to answer questions like, 'where is Africa?' and 'where is Jamaica?'. I tried to make it as interactive as possible by getting them to answer the questions and point to the places on the map. I took them through the reasons for enslavement and the triangular trade, with the three centres of Europe, Africa and the Americas. They had little knowledge of the details of enslavement, or how there came to be Black people in the Caribbean and Americas. I had to explain that because there are lot of Black people there now it does not mean it has always been that way. In terms of enslavement, I emphasised how we were not seen as people but as cattle to be bought and sold. The older children got it and listened intently. The younger ones were not misbehaving, but I think they did get a little bored, so after I had explained what slavery was I told them about Nanny and her exciting story of being sold into enslavement from Ghana and escaping in Jamaica to lead the Winward Maroons in their fight against the British.

Kemi and Kamili were also in the circle and would add to and ask questions of the students whilst I was teaching. The collaborative nature of the lessons is useful as we were able to reinforce and build on what others were teaching. Whether the detailed message of the slave trade got home to the students is questionable. Kamili asked Caleb what happened during enslavement and his answer was 'White people used to whip us'. Caleb is only eight and what stuck with him was the violence of Whites. There could be an impulse here to steer away from the teaching of enslavement because it can be a divisive subject. For example, after the first showing of *Roots* on British television there were clashes between Black and White students in UK schools (Warsama, 2007). However, we felt it was very important for students to know about a central part of their history and to explain the process. It may well

cause ill feeling to towards Whites, but the truth remains, as Caleb put it, that 'White people used to whip us'.

After the lesson we had the children complete a worksheet that asked questions about where Nanny was born and died, what tribe she was from and tried to get them to remember the key points that she was an escaped enslaved African who fought for freedom and organised the Maroons. As always the Black pride message was key, which was why it was important after explaining enslavement to tell the story of Nanny who rose from her shackles and fought off the British. Even in the most awful of periods there are redemptive stories.

Speaking to the parents when they came about what we had done I found out that some had never heard of Nanny. They all appreciated the Black history element of Saturday school because their children got to learn things about themselves they would not in mainstream schools. I spoke to Natasha's mom and showed her the map and tried to explain what we were teaching. Natasha, aged five, remembered quite a bit of things about enslavement and Nanny, which she explained to her mother.

The older students remembered most of the information and could answer the questions easily. We had to work on the younger students though and maybe should have produced different worksheets for different age groups. It is not realistic to expect children aged between four and twelve to have the same lesson and work to do. Every week when we do a Black History lesson we give them a poster (made from the Black History booklet I produced) with information about the figure we learnt about to take home. This way they could keep it and refer back to it when they are older and able to better understand. Also the parents told us that they found the information useful and reinforce it with their children.

Labraya's grandmother was surprised there were not more children at the Saturday school and mentioned that there were much more in the heyday of the Lumumba. A few parents have also mentioned the decline in popularity. There are routinely less than ten

students, when records indicate at times as many as one hundred enrolled, with fifty attending on a regular basis. This decline in attendance does raise the question of the relevance of Saturday school today, though all the parents who bought their children were very positive about the programme and surprised that more people did not come. Sharama's mom especially liked the Black history side of the Saturday school. She was very passionate about the need to learn about our history so that the children could have 'pride in being Black'.

Vusi's dad, was late again, but when he arrived he had a question about how the ethical review board for the research worked. I explained the process of having to outline ethical concerns and then being given approval. He was enthusiastic about the research and happy to see a Black man doing his PhD. The Black community has been in the past accused of anti-intellectualism but I have not found this in my dealings with the Lumumba Saturday School, in fact it has been quite the opposite with people being proud of academic achievement and eager to engage in discussions.

At the end of Saturday school Vusi, Caleb and Makeda and played tig and tag. It was pretty exhausting and also a lot of fun. We need to make sure there are some boundaries though in terms of discipline because Caleb can get a bit cheeky sometimes.

21.3.09

I was late again to Saturday school, arriving at noon. My sister had stopped coming at by this time, after being initially enthusiastic about volunteering in the Saturday school and talking about lots of different ideas for that we could do to make the programme work better. I asked her why she no longer came to the programme and it was the time commitment that was the biggest obstacle for her. 'I work full time, five days a week, so giving up my whole Saturday is a lot to ask' she said. This is a big problem in the maintenance of Black supplementary school programmes. It can be difficult to find volunteers who will give up

their free time if they also work full time. In the beginning of our involvement of Saturday school my sister suggested that we set up a rota, where people either work the morning or the afternoon, or perhaps alternate between different weeks. Menelik had also mentioned starting a rota, the problem is finding enough volunteers to enable the rota system to fully function.

I arrived late but apparently so did Kamili who said she arrived at around quarter to eleven. Kemi found parents waiting outside with the children and then had to start the class and give them some work to do. This is a major problem with the set up. Kamili has to be there early every week and there is little help for her. It again comes back to getting more people involved in order to lessen the strain on volunteers. More people on a rota would certainly make it easier to get people involved because we would not be asking them to give up four hours of their weekend every Saturday.

When I got to the Saturday school I found two boys, non-identical twins aged eleven called Matthew and Julian. They had come the week before when I was not at the school. When I eventually introduced myself they seemed very engaged and were getting on with their work, but they also seemed a bit cheeky.

Kamili was tired, understandably, and got the children to check each other's work. This is a good idea to foster peer mentoring and develop relationships and a feeling of responsibility. It also helps to firm up the knowledge of those who are giving the help, as it forces them to explain the basics of their understanding. Perhaps, this could be something that is incorporated on a regular basis.

We had lunch and the students were a lot tidier than usual. Kamili was stressing the fact that they have been messing up the carpet over the last few weeks and need to be much more careful when eating. During lunchtime Tobias was misbehaving again, kicking out at people and generally messing around. I had to take him aside about three times for various offences. You literally had to watch him the whole time to make sure he was not doing

something he should not have been. I was not entirely sure of the best way to deal with him, although his behaviour improved and he was less cheeky. Part of the problem might be his age. He had only recently turned five, and just started school. He may just have needed time to adjust to a structured environment. Kamili had been speaking to his mother about his behaviour and not been particularly impressed with the response. Kemi thought she probably found it difficult to cope because she is a single parent with three young sons.

There is an issue with discipline and I would say that the children did not always listen. Kamili and Kemi gathered them around in a circle and told them the importance of having respect for Saturday school and that they need to listen to us in the same way that they listen to their parents and school teachers. Sometimes, it must be difficult for the students to spend the majority of their Saturday doing more learning and to not get restless. Also the Saturday School is more informal than mainstream school and some of the younger children get carried away. On the other hand Kamili at times is a disciplinarian. When she does tell them off, they definitely listen.

After lunch Kemi had planned to talk about Mary Seacole. Kemi had printed off some material but was in no mood to do the lesson, and neither was Kamili after telling off of the students, so I stepped in and took the lesson. Being adaptable and prepared for different eventualities is necessary in the Saturday school. With the voluntary nature of the staff, there are times when you have to fill in for people.

I got the children to form a circle and again brought out the map, which is a very useful tool when teaching Black history. The Diasporic nature of Black history is such that our history is connected to many different continents. I placed the map in the middle so that all the students could see it and be involved in pointing out different places. One of the problems with the set up was that a couple of the children got so enthusiastic about being involved and using the map that they could not sit in their chairs. Before we had even started

the session I had to threaten them with not being able to go to the park if they were not quiet. It sort of worked, but I had to repeatedly make this threat throughout the class.

I went round before we started and asked them if they liked the Black History lessons. Akeela, who was the oldest at twelve, said she liked the Black history because 'they never taught us nothing about our history in schools' (a recurring theme). I started the lesson by asking them if they had ever heard of Mary Seacole (a Black nurse for the British troops in the Crimean War). Some of them had and brought up Florence Nightingale (there are now reports that Florence Nightingale might have been Creole, according to one of the parents). Kemi chimed in with how Mary Seacole came before Florence Nightingale, but that she was not as popular because she was not White. The children asked if Mary Seacole was better than Nightingale. This is one of the problems when we start to get into Negritude, 'the taking pride in Black people who did things before White people' as Henry calls it. We start to judge ourselves by the merits of White people. So the focus is not on Seacole's accomplishments and their relevance, but is turned onto if she is better than the White lady. Whatever the limits, however, the students found a certain comfort in the superiority of Seacole. She was superior but was held back because of it and Makeda vowed to 'never let that happen' to her.

The conversation turned back to enslavement, as it always seems to. Caleb said something about how we used to get beaten during enslavement (he always brings up something along these lines). Julian asked why people never 'killed them [White people] in their sleep' instead of being slaves. I gave a not particularly good answer about how sometimes they did, that there were numerous rebellions and in some of them the primary goal was to achieve freedom by killing the White slave holders, for example Nat Turner in America (Aptheker, 2004). I also tried to stress the power that the slaveholders had over the enslaved. The gun being what had enable the capture and enslavement of Africans in the first instance and then the extreme physical punishment for any enslaved African who rebelled. In

the case of America they were simply outnumbered by the White population, so there was really no hope of a revolution like in Haiti where there could be independence. I mentioned Nanny and Toussaint who fought and secured victories (to differing extents) against the slave holders, but more work is needed on rebellions during enslavement. We cannot tell the story of enslavement as a passive one, where Africans did not resist. This is one of the biggest dangers of the slavery narrative. Black pride is essential, as the teachings in the Lumumba school have made clear, and there is much to be proud of in our history of enslavement. At no point did our ancestors submit or give up their dreams of Black freedom.

28.3.09

When I arrived at Saturday school the students were studying English. I helped Tobias and Jermaine with their work, going through the letters of the alphabet. Jermaine was young, aged four, and he was struggled to get through it. He had yet to start school so we were helping him prepare him for the next year. Tobias had difficulty concentrating but did get through it in the end. He could be a pain and had difficulty staying on task, but he was keen to finish his work. In fact he rushes through it too quickly and often has to repeat things he has got wrong. Jermaine was quite withdrawn at times and it could be difficult to get him to follow something. I had to show him how to write letters numerous times and he did not seem to always get it. He got quite frustrated at one point trying to get through the work but in the end he did finish it all. When he was done I gave him a high five and this cheered him up. Also, one of the older students Matthew joined in and gave him a high five. It was a nice touch and Jermaine was proud of his work. This is something that is definitely missing from the school experience of separating out the older from the younger kids. Building relationships across the age groups can have a positive effect on the performance of all children in the classroom (Klem & Connell, 2004). Also, the lack of formality in the Saturday

school (though not completely informal) allowed for spontaneous acts such as these to develop. At times there was a strong supportive atmosphere in the classroom, and everyone helped everyone else to succeed. However, there were also problems with the mixing of the different age groups.

Tobias was really annoying Matthew, by kicking his chair and making faces. In turn Matthew was taking Tobias's hat and calling him names. Matthew is twice Tobias's age so the effect of the name calling and Matthew bossing him around was visible. Matthew had a games console and he refused to let any of the younger children play. He and his twin brother were generally misbehaving in front of the younger ones and trying to be funny to get them to laugh. In this role they also started to get a little cheeky with me and Kamili in front of the younger students. I took the brothers out of the room to talk to them. I thought about shouting at them telling them off, but instead I focused on the positive atmosphere that had been in the classroom earlier. I told them I was disappointed and expected better from them because the younger children looked up to them. I got them to admit what they had been doing wrong and asked whether they thought it was appropriate. They agreed that they should not be misbehaving and I stressed to them that they were role models for the younger children and I did not expect to have to tell them off. Instead they should be making sure the younger ones were doing what they were supposed to be: the basic principles of peer mentoring. Menelik was doing something upstairs and as he came by he told them to stop messing around. I am not sure if he would have gone with the softly, softly approach I was taking, but he never interfered. Anyway, the two of them agreed to be better examples and share the things they had brought to the Saturday school. After the talk they went back in and they really made an effort to share their things and get the other kids involved. Julian, in particular, was encouraging everyone and making sure they got some playing time. He had to take Matthew to task a couple of times over his not letting Mark have a go, but they took a little bit more

responsibility for their actions at least. Julian is definitely better behaved than his brother and I hoped that he could have a positive effect on Matthew. I had to speak to Matthew again after lunch because he was being harsh to Tobias. Also, when we were calling out the questions about Malcolm X, later, he was shouting out silly things trying to be funny to impress people. I again stressed to him that it was not acceptable. He apologised and promised to be better, but I was not convinced. When he went back into the room he seemed to be sarcastically encouraging the younger kids, though I could just be being cynical. We definitely needed to foster the kind of environment where the older pupils looked after younger ones. Julian was very good at this after having been told, and he actually seemed to enjoy it.

In the afternoon we talked about Malcolm X with the students. We had settled into a routine with the Black history lessons, where the kids expected it and there was a certain formula. We had them in a circle and then talked through a person or place with them and had them ask and answer questions as we went along. They seemed to look forward it, well the older ones at least. Kemi could not make it but had printed out some information from the booklet and given it to Kamili. Firstly, Kamili recapped from the things we learnt the week before about Mary Seacole. Some of the students remembered a lot, Vusi and Makeda even remembered the name of the Crimean War. Kamili read out the information on Malcolm X from the Black history booklet, and as she went through it she asked them questions about what she was reading. For example, the text says he was a Black nationalist and we had to explain what a Black nationalist was. This was quite difficult to children of ages between four and twelve, as it was not easy to find the right words. I tried my best to explain it as when Black people come together to do things and have their own organisations. Afterwards I thought that I should have explained it as Black as a nation connecting all Black people as African. Or as Joseph (2008: pg. 188) puts it 'Black is a country' that crosses over the several

national boundaries. They might have understood this and is something I will certainly try in the future.

Kamili did not seem too informed on the information about Malcolm, claiming that he rejected Islam before he died. I part clarified what she said but did not want to say outright that she was wrong, so as not to undermine her. Better research was sometimes needed to make sure we knew all the information. In this case I think the problem was that Kemi was going to do this but could not at the last minute, so Kamili was unprepared.

When we went round and asked the children one thing they knew about Malcolm X, after the teaching, Tamika had some very good information. She knew the year he was born and almost remembered the year his dad was killed. She was clearly paying attention to what was going on. The younger ones were a bit nonplussed. All that Tobias could offer was that 'he was a man' and Labraya remembered that he was Black. Mark came out with 'he's bad'. When we asked him why he said 'because he was a criminal'. Kamili and another lady, who popped in randomly and said she was going to teach in the school, tried to explain to not focus on the negative and to look to the positives, 'what did he do after he left prison?' Kamili asked. None of the students were really able to say and this is, in truth, because we never actually told them. The booklet definitely needs to be updated to reflect what he actually did, other than preach about the Nation of Islam, and to stress why Malcolm is so important. The way this session went disappointed me. It was frustrating that using the booklet I created, and even verbally, I was unable to properly articulate the importance of the person I perceive as the most important figure in modern Black radicalism, to a group of students at Saturday school.

Mark definitely had issues concentrating, which I discussed with Kamili after class. He looked like he was listening and not misbehaving, but when you asked him something he had no idea what you are talking about. After we had had this whole discussion about why

Malcolm was not bad, we came back round him later and we asked one fact about Malcolm that he knew and he repeated, 'he's bad'.

Within the session there was a general discussion about prisons, what happens in them and why they are bad. Students were afraid of not being free in prison and the older boys did not want to go because as Julian put it they 'don't want to be raped'. The lady who came in (who used to go to Saturday school), went round the circle and got them to answer 'what are prisons for?'. Most of the kids said something like 'naughty people', whilst Julian came out with 'Black people', again showing the awareness that children have from a young age about the stereotypes in society. The answer the lady gave was 'to dehumanise you' and she explained the process. Julian talked about visiting prison when he was younger and wanting to see Mandela's cell. Kamili was clear to stress that none of the kids were going to end up in prison. She said 'we're too good for that, we don't want you ending up in prison'. I can see the motivation behind the comments to give them pride in themselves and get them to aim high but I am not sure if this lowers the expectations of them too much. Were any of them thinking about prison as a possible destination? Should we, however implicitly, be sending the message that not finding yourself in prison is an achievement?

The children did not all quite get the importance of Malcolm changing his last name to X because his father's surname, Little, was a slave name. I was speaking to Natasha afterwards for a few minutes about this and tried to explain to the her the power of the family name, how it was part of the dehumanising process to impose the name of the slave holder, therefore cutting the cultural connections to Africa. I really could not work out how to do explain it to her well. Her dad came and I tried to explain it in front of him and it did not really work so he said he would try to explain it 'better at home'. One thing I was doing was tying it back to the past and Africa, when maybe the better way would have been to tie it forward. So I could have said something like 'imagine if your family name was taken away

and replaced by something else which was nothing to do with you'. This might have worked and is something to think about in the future.

A big issue that the students had difficulty with was the that Malcolm X was a Muslim. Muslims for the students are people from Pakistani, Bangladesh or Somalia. Julian asked if Malcolm was Somalian, for example. They had difficulty getting the concept of a Black Muslim. We stressed it repeatedly but this is not always enough, obviously. They also had strongly connected Islam with terrorism and this made it difficult for them to relate to Malcolm. We need to explain this better to people and not only children. I have experience talking to university students about Malcolm X and them turning around and saying he was a fundamentalist Muslim and to look at what they had done to the world today. The legacy of Malcolm X is not one we have protected well as a community. In my experience, a lot of fear and suspicion arises when we invoke his name. Again, this is very frustrating for myself being a strong advocate of Malcolm's. On the one hand we could argue that maybe we need to let Malcolm X (and some of this Black radicalism) go, however, I would argue that it is about education. Once people hear the real Malcolm X it is often a different story.

We had the children answer questions about the topic and I got Jermaine and Tobias to draw a picture of Malcolm X instead because they were a bit young. Tobias got excited about drawing the picture and he did a pretty good one, too.

I spoke to Tamika's mom and asked if she thought her daughter was enjoying the Saturday school. Her response was very firm and clear: 'it doesn't matter, they don't teach Black history in school'. She was very adamant that the history aspect was extremely important and the reason that she enrolled her daughter in the programme. I also spoke to Tobias's mom and told her he was doing a lot better. She was surprised and said she thought I was going to tell her he was banned for three weeks. She was obviously happy about the progress he had made over the weeks.

4.4.09

The only students at the Lumumba Saturday School when I arrived came with Kemi (Caleb and some people I had never met) and Tobias and Mark, who are brothers. It was school holiday time and when school is broken up parents tend to think that Saturday school is also closed and so they do not always bring their children in. This could be evidence of a connection between mainstream school and the supplementary schools in the parents minds, with Saturday school being seen as an extension of mainstream schooling. It is also true that the Saturday school is closed for the school holidays at Easter, Christmas and over the summer.

Kamili commented on some of the students who were missing, including Vusi, who had not come for a few weeks and also Sharama who also had been absent for a while. Children not attending regularly, or dropping out altogether without notice, is something that has happened a lot in the past according to Kamili. I do not know what you can do about this, apart from maybe call the parents and ask them if they are going to come back and if not, why have they left the school. It may also be an idea to ask the parents for fees for a few weeks in advance, though this would probably be impractical given the economic position of some of the parents, especially the families we would most want to attract. Ultimately, you cannot force people to attend, but it does make it difficult for long term planning. The flexibility is an essential part of the benefit of Saturday schools for parents, but at the same time poses difficulties for the staff.

I helped Tobias to complete a word search while Kemi, Tobias's mom Charlene and Kamili were having a discussion about Black history. Tobias and Mark were a bit restless and Caleb was being pretty cheeky, which was understandable given that there were no other children and their parents present. It does make discipline a little bit harder in those situations, especially because when I pointed out to Tobias that he had work wrong, if he did

not want to correct it he simply got up and went to his mom to see if it was okay. There was an incident with Caleb where he went out of the room to see someone from the organisation downstairs without announcing it to anyone. I followed him and he said his mom had said he could go. I literally had to take him back upstairs and tell him to ask Kemi again in front of me so I could be sure. Unsurprisingly he did not want to ask her and he kept moaning that he was allowed to go, but eventually he just gave up.

I was only partly involved with the conversation about Black history between Kemi, Kamili and Charlene. It was very interesting though and pointed to a key challenge to the Black radical position. Charlene was sceptical of a lot of the information she had about Black history and had heard conflicting reports. She was most sceptical about the idea that all Black people come from Africa. After a visit to Ethiopia her was mother appalled about the state that the continent was in and explicitly told Charlene we did not descend from Africa. She seemed most put off by the idea that Africa, and in particular that going back to Africa, was a good thing. The mantra of the Rastafarians and Pan-Africanism about Africa does paint a picture of the continent as a paradise and some sort of panacea. This is clearly not the case, and certainly not for Charlene. Her impression of Africa was of a desperately poor continent, where there was no infrastructure and that cannot feed itself, which is large part a true characterisation. She was also very sceptical of the people of Africa, thinking they were involved in bad things like voodoo and she held particular scorn for Mugabe, who in her view controlled Africa. In Charlene's perception of Africa the continent is filled with all manner of backwards activity that we would not want to be involved in. Africa and Africans are for her bad. As she explained it, the state that Africa is in is because of 'a force that is holding it back'. For Charlene this force must be because of 'something that the continent has done, they deserve to be in that position' because of it. The negative portrayal of Africa in the West has been well documented (Wa'Njogu, 2009), and one of the effects this has had is to make

some of those born in the West distance themselves from all things African. The rift that emerged between Caribbeans and Africans in previous decades is testament to this. I can personally attest to the taunting my elder sister got for her African name in school and seeing the lone African child in my school being called a 'monkey' and told to stop 'swinging from trees', by other Black students. Africa does not hold the reverence for all Black people from the Caribbean that the Black radical position gives it.

During the conversation Kemi was trying to explain how the image of Africa we have is not the real one and that there were some books Charlene should read. One of the ones she picked out was the *Destruction of African Civilisation* and also the *Willie Lynch Letter*, which outlines a plan by slaveholders to control the enslaved Africans by, in part, destroying their links to Africa. Kemi talked about how the Europeans had destroyed much of the positives in African history, for example the library in Alexandria (I also added Timbuktu) and the defacing of the Sphinx, blowing off the African nose in order to continue the myth that Black Africa never produced anything. Kemi was trying to explain that the view we have of Africa is wrong, and that the problems that the continent faces today are a direct result of the West stealing resources and halting any serious development. Charlene was not convinced about what she should read, but was very interested in learning and Kemi was trying to point her in a positive direction

The problem with the way Kemi was explaining things was that she was a little bit "out there" on the spiritual end of Pan-Africanism. A lot of the arguments and information she was using was positive but then she started talking about things like how women in Africa used to be able to reproduce themselves without men and how it is unnatural to live in this patriarchal society. It may be unnatural live in a patriarchal society but discussions of self-reproducing women tend to turn people away. This is one of the major limitations of the Uhuru Organisation that leads to people not being involved. For example, I attended one of

their regular meetings with an open mind and the first conversation that I got into was about how no Jewish people had died in the World Trade Center attack, having been pre-warned not to turn up. Everyone in the room was convinced this was the case, despite the fact that it is entirely untrue. Then we had a lesson from an African scholar who explained that the way the world is represented on globes is incorrect and is meant to keep Africa down. He explained that when Africa is represented at the bottom of the world it has to shoulder the spiritual burden from Europe and elsewhere. In fact, he explained that we should flip the globe on its side and see Africa as at the top of the world. This was supported by the fact that in the conventional view of the world numerous rivers run from south to north, and as he explained water 'cannot flow uphill'. He invited us to therefore see the world on its side and wobbling from side to side to account for the daylight patterns. Apparently, this would make us more spiritually aware of our strength. It is safe to say that I did not stay till the end of the talk and I have not been back to one since. It is also pretty easy to see why this kind of talk turns people away, who are seriously interested in Black politics.

Another issue with the discussion was that Charlene had the impression that Kemi was angry at her for what she was saying. She kept prefacing her comments with 'I know it might seem as if I'm trying to be White, but..' and being apologetic for what she was saying. Charlene was certainly wrong in much of what she was saying, and if we were being critically we could say that she was demonstrating a level of ignorance. This may be the case but we cannot blame her for not knowing about Africa when all the information she has received about the continent has been negative. Charlene was also making an effort to redress the lack of information she had. She purposefully bought her children to the Lumumba Saturday School, which is openly and obviously organised around a sense of Africaness. She also was willing to sit down and make statements she knew were controversial and open for criticism (hence 'I don't want to seem White') and ask where to find other information from.

We should never make people feel like they need to worry about, or apologise for asking questions. There is a lot of misinformation about Africa and people need to feel comfortable to talk about it. Charlene is someone who clearly loves Blackness but wants to decouple that from Africaness. It is our responsibility to show how loving Blackness *is* loving Africaness, and you can never truly do one without the other.

In order to do this it is important to remedy the lack of knowledge about African history. Charlene wanted to know more and she asked us for names of books and websites where she could look into things. She also asked about Frederick Douglas and others because she was interested. She was perplexed at how after all this time Africa was still in a bad place and why it could not feed itself. I was trying to explain how these things are ongoing and how colonialism never ended, so the reasons for the plight of Africa are the same they always were: the West is a system that is built on exploiting Africa. I tried to explain a lot of the ways in which the West keeps Africa down. I used the example of colonial rice production in Ghana (see Chapter One) and how that kept the country dependent on resources from outside and also meant that native rice production plummeted making it difficult of the country to feed itself. I am not sure I did the best job, because I perceived myself as coming across as an intellectual and my rice production example might not have been that well explained. I did promise to bring in some books for her next time including *Destruction of African Civilisation* and *Africa Must Unite* by Kwame Nkrumah. For me personally, how to explain things without sounding condescending is a big issue.

Charlene also argued that maybe we should model ourselves on the Europeans and the Chinese because they are successful. This may be a valid point and I hear it made frequently, but I wanted to make the argument that we need to be different because how they have developed may be successful in that it brings numerous advantages in wealth and living conditions to certain sections of the population, however it is problematic because it is

dependent on the exploitation and marginalisation of most of the globe (including a large proportion of the Chinese workforce). It should also be noted that Africa could not develop like the West because the West is dependent on the underdevelopment of Africa. That is a circle that can never be squared.

What became evident from this conversation is the importance of Africa. The Black history (or as Menelik would say 'African history') lessons in the school are not simply about messages of pride and the psychological benefits, though as we have seen over the weeks this is an important aspect. The real power of the African link is that it ties us to the Diaspora of Black people worldwide. We learn about our roots not just for self-fulfilment but to connect us to the other branches of the tree. This is one of the key distinctions between the Black liberal and Black radical positions. Black liberals do not necessarily connect to the Diaspora, and it is here that Menelik's distinction between 'Black' and 'African' history becomes apparent. It is in the liberal version of Black history where the entire focus is on pride and self-upliftment, and this is evident from looking through some of the material in Lumumba school and when I came across a game called *Identity*.

Identity is a Black heritage game that tries to get children to learn about their history by going round a board and answering questions about different Black heroes. I took the game away for a week, because there were some pieces missing and I was not sure of the rules, so I wanted to see if I could work it out before playing it with the students. I never worked out how to play it (very complicated) but more importantly looking at the figures in the game there were none that predated enslavement. It was an American game so most of the figures were African Americans who had achieved in some field like business, or science (along traditional Negritudinal lines). There were also key figures such as Malcolm X, Martin Luther King and Booker T Washington. The message from this game was clear, "your history starts with slavery and is limited to national borders". There was no international dimension

the at all. Black liberalism eschews internationalism because its focus is on success within a system that depends on the exploitation of Black people worldwide. Black radicalism takes a different view, that we cannot be disconnected from other Black peoples and this is why the African history taught in places like the Lumumba school brings in figures from America, the Caribbean, Africa and pre-enslaved societies. This history is essential to connect us to Africa and therefore the Diaspora, not solely because of pride but to connect us to an international politics where we work for the freedom of all Black people no matter where we reside. It is this fundamental principle that underlies Black radicalism: there can be no freedom for Black people anywhere unless there is freedom for Black people everywhere, and the key to this is Africa.

We can tie Black people in the Diaspora in terms of historical connection, but the big question for Black radicalism is how do we connect this global view and the fight in Africa to people's everyday experience in places like Britain. Once we start talking about global structures and continental organisation people see the task as too great. I was trying to talk about this in the conversation with Charlene, to argue that the problem is great but we can do something about it. What I received in return was the standard "well what can we do?" attitude and argument. This is a big problem for the work we do from a radical position and not something that has never really been resolved.

There is also the issue here of educating the parents. It is not sufficient to give the students a lesson if when they go home it is not reinforced, or may even be undermined. It is good that Charlene came and talked because she had obviously been reading the information we had sent home with the students and talking to them about it. There are classes run by the Uhuru organisation but as I mentioned earlier there are huge problems with their talks and I am sure they would quickly scare people like Charlene off. The spirituality message has serious limits. Political education is just that, with a political purpose and we have to move

away from and beyond the spiritual Black is beautiful message to one that is based on a serious analysis and can provide the necessary practical steps towards building a Black radical movement.

16.5.09

This is the first time I had attended Saturday school in a few weeks, for a number of reasons. Firstly, there was a three week break over the Easter holidays and then I was away on holiday. When I got back from I was ill but popped in briefly to say I was ill (no one came close because they thought I had swine flu), and also to drop of some papers we had printed at the university called *Say it Louder*. *Say it Louder* is a publication by Black students that cover the issues that affect Black people locally, nationally and globally.

On my first day back I was late and when I got there only Kemi and Chris were there with the students. Kamili did say she would miss the previous week, but I was not sure where she was on this week. Attendance of staff can be as fluctuating as that of the students, as my non-attendance had demonstrated. When I arrived Kemi was just getting out a book that they had gone through the last week about animals, and preparing an activity for the afternoon in which the students were to make some pretty animals. She seemed genuinely surprised and relieved to see me because Menelik had told her that I was ill.

I was thrown in at the deep end, being asked to teach a class to the seven students that were in attendance. All of the students were sitting in a semi circle around a whiteboard with a chart on it displaying information on animals they had read about in a book that Chris had gone through with them the week before. I had not seen the book and did not have any idea of what was going on so I just had to feel my way through the lesson. I would not say the idea of running the class filled me with dread, but I was not prepared. It ended up going well enough in the end. Before I had started, the children told me that they knew how to spell all of the

animals they had learnt about. The first thing I did, then, was to pick an animal and get them to spell it out. I had the copy of the book that they used the last week, so I went through the book and started with an elephant, firstly getting them to spell it and then to tell me what food it ate and where it lived. I honestly had to ad lib some information about herbivores, carnivores and omnivores, and made sure to use examples for every explanation. Every time I gave them a new word I got them to spell it collectively and also to repeat it as a group.

The relationships I had built with the pupils came into play here. They were comfortable to adlib their way through the lesson with me. Had I been unfamiliar to them I imagine that this ad hoc kind of teaching would have been crucified. I made sure I added in quite a bit of information and they were all engaged, asking and answering questions about animals and spelling. It helped that I came across as knowledgeable on the subject. Though I was not prepared I knew what they wanted and needed to know about animals. However well the class went, though, we would definitely have benefited from some sort of lesson plan being in place before the class with clear identification of who was running the session. I wonder if the parents would have been happy to know that I turned up and started teaching about animals off the top of my head. In general the Lumumba Saturday School can be quite disorganised. Weekly meetings to discuss who is doing what so they can draw up lesson plans were suggested in the past, but never materialised. The benefit that more "official" programmes with qualified teachers, is that this preparation is something that they are used to doing and if they are getting paid certainly is an encouragement for the extra work. Our more unstructured approach can work and I would say the students certainly learnt but we could have better organised the time to maximise what the students got out of the programme.

The lesson went well and everybody listened apart from Tobias, who had problems sitting still and concentrating. Discipline is, as usual, an issue and I would partly put this down to the less formal teacher-student relationships. In the less formal environment it seems

as though the students may be more prone to act up, in fact Kamili often says 'would you behave this way in school?'. At lunchtime Caleb was really misbehaving and Mark copied him. At one point over lunch I had to sit everyone down and have them go through the rules of the Saturday school (which are up on the wall in big letters) because they were teasing each other. When I told Tobias to recite the rules in front of everyone he pretended he did not know what they were. I was not too hard on him at the time because I was not sure if he was being cheeky or nervous, but I was firm with him and he eventually got the message and recited the rules. I also had to take Caleb and Mark out of the room and have a private word with them. I was my usual calm self and asked them the ages of all the children in the room. They were two of the oldest and I told them I expected better, the same way I had done with the two brothers a few weeks ago. I also reminded them that they were role models for the younger students. This seemed to have an impact for a while although I then had to separate them again and speak to Caleb on his own, again. Eventually they stopped messing around, after I made them sit in separate corners for five minutes. Generally, the students are well behaved, it is just a couple of the boys who can get a bit cheeky and test the boundaries.

In the afternoon we did an activity where we got the students to stick tissue paper on pictures of animals. I was not sure of the educational value of these activities but the students certainly seemed to be enjoying themselves doing it. There was no Black history element this week as we were focusing on the doing the animal activities. The following week we were taking them to the nature centre to look at some more animals and using the research money to pay for the trip. It was good to see the diverse nature of the topics taught at the Lumumba school. It was not simply the basics of Maths and English plus Black history. I was also excited to see that there was a field trip to put the learning of this week into use.

Kemi had instituted the recitation of the *African Pledge* for the students to officially open and close Saturday school. The idea is based on the pledge of allegiance to the flag that

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American students do in school. When I came in I caught the end of it and then witnessed it in full at the end of the day. The pledge goes as follows:

> We are an Afrikan People!!
>
> We will remember the humanity, glory and suffering of our ancestors.
>
> We will honour the struggles of our elders.
>
> We will strive to bring new values and new life to our people.
>
> We will have peace and harmony among us.
>
> We will be loving, sharing and creative.
>
> We will work, study and listen so we may learn, learn so we may teach.
>
> We will cultivate self reliance.
>
> We will struggle to resurrect and unify our homeland.
>
> We will raise many children for our nation.
>
> We will have discipline, patience, devotion and courage.
>
> We will live as models to provide new directions for our people.
>
> We will be free and self-determining.
>
> We are an Afrikan people,
>
> and we will win,
>
> and we will win,
>
> and we will win!

In the pledge the commitment to Africaness stands out and reinforces the importance of the Diaspora. As African's we have certain responsibilities to each other and are tied together by our common descent. The pledge works along the lines of self-belief and commitment to Diaspora, themes that have been evident thorough my time at the Saturday school. It is also a very hopeful and positive pledge as it outlines what 'we will' achieve. It also ends with the words 'we will win' as the Black radical position is always the optimistic one. The pledge is

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from America but is being used in the British context because the issues cut across national boundaries and go to the heart of the politics of Diaspora. Kemi is very keen on the political dimension to the teaching. A few of the parents were around for the pledge and they also all spoke positively about bringing it in. One of the main reasons they bring their children to the Lumumba school is for the Black history and connection to Africa.

Sharama was back after being away for a few weeks. I had not seen her since the conversation I had with her mother about the research, and feared that after talking to me again about it I may have scared her away. Her mother, however, bought up the research again and commented that she hadn't seen *me* around for a while. I had forgotten that I had missed a few weeks. Natasha and Jermaine's mom started conversations with me about how the research was going and wished me all the best. My paranoia about people not being receptive to the research has been unfounded in all my time at the Lumumba school. Sharama is doing well, always listens and is keen to impress. Sharama, Natasha and even Jermaine all made a big effort to count to 100 today.

6.6.09

Only Sharama attended Saturday school. There has been an outbreak of swine flu in the area, effecting one of the local schools, and this seems to have kept everyone away. Last week's session was cancelled entirely because of swine flu and the trip to the nature centre postponed.

When I arrived there was just Kamili and Sharama's mother talking about issues ranging from Black people to Muslim women. I was not really involved in the conversation because I was playing with Sharama and her little sister. We were drawing and also played musical statues with me banging on the back of a chair for the musical accompaniment.

13.6.09

When I arrived there were only three students present. Swine flu decimated the attendance. The three that did attend were Akeela, Labraya and Sharama. Akeela was working on magnets, so I looked at her work and took her through some of the questions. She seemed to know the information pretty well, and was confident when I asked her questions not on her worksheet. The one to one aspect is a good way for them to learn and also to build relationships.

While the students were eating lunch a visitor came in from Uganda called Mable. She had just moved to the country and had found the Uhuru Organisation on the city council's volunteer website. It surprised all of us that the organisation would be on the council's website, given the antagonistic history between the two and the radical nature of Uhuru. It shows the thawing of the relations with the local government, which is also displayed by the nominal funding that the Lumumba Saturday School receives. On the one hand this could be viewed as a positive development on the part of the council. On the other it could be seen as demonstrating that the Uhuru organisation, having moved to a cultural nationalist position, is no longer a threat to state concerns. Certainly in the United States one of the major criticisms that the Black Panthers had of Karenga's organisation was that it was supported by the state, and was therefore counterrevolutionary (Ngozi-Brown, 1997).

Mable was interested in volunteering at the Saturday school. I did not get too excited at the prospect of another teacher because we had seen a number of people before who were interested once and have then never been seen again. We introduced her to the students and asked them if they knew where Uganda was. There were mostly blank faces, but Akeela did know that it was in Africa. When Mable asked what we taught the students Kamili replied with Maths, English and Science but did not mention Black history at all. I was surprised because Kamili has never shown any reticence about doing the Black history lessons, and

seems to enjoy leading them. It may just have been a meaningless slip, or it may have displayed her prioritising the subjects we do in the morning sessions.

After lunch we took the students out to the park. It was good to get them some fresh air, which we had always planned to do after the weather picked up. It is only a short walk from the Uhuru organisation to a little park with a basketball court and a some slides and swings etc. The students were well behaved walking down to the park, probably because they knew if they were not then we would be turning right back around and sitting in the classroom in silence. At the park, Kamili and I were reminiscing about how parks like this one were different back in the day. At the local park we used to go to there was a huge slide and roundabout, with no concerns for twenty first century concepts of health and safety. Kamili also mentioned a time she remembered loads of Black people on a roundabout in the park. It was an important part of her growing up, being with friends and specifically being around other Black children. Some of the students at the Lumumba school come from the other side of the city and do not live in a area with a high Black population. Matthew and Julian's dad spoke about the need for them to come to the school to get the 'Blackness side of things' as they lived across the city.

While we were at the park Labraya asked me to push her on a swing. As I was pushing her she kept wanting to go 'higher', so I joked that I could push her all the way round the top of the bar and back down. She thought this would be funny and kept asking me to push her more. Honestly, I was pushing her harder than was responsible and on one swing she flew off the seat and hit the floor. Thankfully, she did not cry for too long and there was no major damage, she just had a bit of a sore knee. Obviously, this incident put an end to playtime and we took them all back to the classroom. No one really said anything to me about the incident, but I felt quite guilty about it. She had not bumped her head, so we did not need to worry about concussion. Kamili described it to her grandmother, when she came pick

Labraya up, as 'she had a little fall'. I felt I should better explain, so admitted to her grandmother that I pushed her off swing. By this time Labraya was happy and playing again and her grandmother was not too concerned. After this incident I wish we had taken into consideration some of the health and safety concerns. Partly, what lead to the accident was the informal relationship. On the one hand it is beneficial because the students can have fun and feel comfortable, but on the other it did lead to me treating Labraya on the swing more like a family friend than a student, which resulted in her being thrown off the swing. Having "fun" part was an essential of what we tried to do at the Lumumba school. The project is all day long and we do have a serious commitment to learning but there also needs to be an environment that the students enjoy, or else they will choose not to come back and spend their weekends at the Lumumba school. This is one of the main reasons that the highest age is usually twelve where students keep coming back, because after that point their parents stop forcing them to.

After we brought them back from the park we sat and had them read. I also spent some time trying to fix a table that had been broken during one of the Uhuru Organisation's events. Some people had been sleeping in the room (we found some mattresses stacked up in the corner), and it looked like someone may have tried to sleep on the table. The connection to the Uhuru Organisation was beneficial, but there were certainly drawbacks.

20.6.09

When I got to the Uhuru building for Saturday school I first had to see Cleveland about the Pamoja Organisation that I had recently got involved with. Pamoja is a community organisation started by Henry and others in the seventies that had fallen into trouble. Pamoja had formed a new board to take over its operation and myself and Cleveland were a part of it. Cleveland is also a member of Uhuru and the two organisations have had links since their

inception. I was meeting with Cleveland to discuss making a promotional film to raise funds for the organisation. We discussed the documentary downstairs, whilst Menelik was around. He did not seem particularly keen on the idea of the video, thinking it would be too difficult to make and to do well. We got into a wider discussion about Pamoja in general and the issue of how best to deal with the debts. The discussion revealed an issue that I have long held with the Uhuru organisation: buildings.

The debts of Pamoja were substantial and ran to over £300,000. What kept the organisation afloat was a portfolio of three buildings worth approximately £800,000. Pamoja House, is a truly breathtaking building (though in need of work) where they used to run a hostel for homeless men, and was valued at £425,000. The discussion with Menelik was focused on the decision that the committee was taking on whether to sell the building to clear the debt, and invest into the nursery provision that Pamoja was keen to restart. For me this was not a difficult decision and I was firmly in the camp that wished to sell the building. The other options being floated were to borrow up to £450,000 to pay off the debts and turn the building into flats that could be let out to pay off the loan. Considering that the organisation had already overstretched itself with loans it seemed like madness to even think about taking out more debt to cover the inability to pay the former ones. Menelik strongly disagreed and did not necessarily see the increased debt as a problem as long as the committee was far more competent than the one that had run the organisation into the ground. His larger point though was the need to keep the building in the hands of the community.

Within the community there is a steadfastness over the issue of buildings. As one of the Pamoja committee members put in his pitch to loan more money, 'we would be foolish to give up land'. There had been numerous appeals to keep various disused local building in the hands of the Black community. The irony seemed lost on everyone that we were fighting to keep hold of buildings that we did not use. That is the reason that the local council wanted to

dispose of various buildings and why the committee needed, and agreed, to sell Pamoja House. The hostel closed years ago and had been sitting empty ever since. It was a lovely building but there were no plans to use it. The suggestion of turning it into flats would have meant we would have had a building that we still could not use for any purpose other than paying off the debt to keep it. Our priorities are all wrong, we are not thinking of ways to build community but concentrating our efforts to get the community to save buildings. This was even when the building obsession is to the detriment of one of the oldest organisations in the Black community. Menelik arguing for saving the building was not surprising as one of Uhuru's main ambitions was, and is, to build a multi-purpose building in the community.

For a number of years Uhuru have had plans to build a state of the art centre for the organisation that would be a hub for the community and also include classrooms for the Lumumba school. This would solve one of the key problems for the Saturday school that Kemi raised of the poor facilities. Such a building would be a wonderful resource for the community, the only issue is that it the Uhuru's plans would cost approximately £10 million. If we could have raised £10 million would not that be better spent trying to solve some of the issues we face in the community? More fundamental than this is that the problem with Uhuru was not that it did not have a state of the art building, but that people were not motivated to be part of the organisation. A good building cannot solve that problem, just as saving all the derelict buildings that the Black community previously used, would make no difference without strong organisations backed by the people.

During my long conversation with Menelik and Cleveland, Kamili came downstairs from Saturday school. At this point I had not gone up the stairs yet and felt pretty guilty. I apologised for not having gone up yet, but she said it was fine because only three students had shown up. Swine flu, or at least the fear of it, had taken a lasting toll on our attendance.

When I eventually got up the stairs I found the brothers Matthew and Julian along with Labraya. I apologised to Labraya for the last week and the swing incident but she seemed to have forgotten about it. Matthew and Julian had not been for a while. When I asked them why not they said they had been doing others things. Julian went to the gym and said he was going to go the following as well. The issue with the students doing other activities on the weekends had been raised by Kamili a number of times before as to why they do not attend regularly.

Matthew and Julian were hungry because their dad had forgotten to give them food. I agreed to take them to the shop and we went down to a local food store. It took a while, but we chatted on the way down there. They were well behaved while we were out and lost all the cheek they could sometimes have. In the Black owned food store, there were some Chinese people working and Julian thought that maybe the Chinese owned half of the place. I told Julian that if he wanted to know he should not be afraid to ask, so he questioned the man in the store. When he asked about the ownership the owner explained that the Chinese were 'very good workers'. There was certainly the intimation that Black people were not, in his reply. The owner seemed generally amused about the idea of half the ownership being Chinese and also was very quick to dispel any myths on this issue. What struck me from the encounter was how Julian had picked up on the issue of Black ownership at the age of twelve. When he said he thought the place was half Chinese owned, he said in a way that suggested we should not put our money in there. Black ownership of businesses has always been an issue in the community and especially in recent years with disturbances that erupted over the Asian sales of Black hair care products. This has not been lost on the young Julian and I half expected him to recite the slogan "fight back, buy Black".

When we got back we ate the food pretty uneventfully. I chatted to Kamili about her birthday and everything was relaxed. When the students had finished their lunch we played

Connect4 for a bit. After that went back to finishing off the work they did in the morning. The boys were doing some Biology work about the body where they had to draw labels and answer questions. They were not very committed to this at all, were not concentrating and started drawing rude(ish) pictures. Matthew (who is always the worst out the two) had to be sent out at one point by Kamili for being rude. Chris was literally shouting at Matthew at one point. After leaving him for a bit Kamili asked me to go have a word with him. I went out and told him we expected better and asked him why he was acting so foolishly. He genuinely seemed embarrassed about it, and I bought up the fact his dad was coming and I would have to report his behaviour to him. Discipline with older boys could be a problem because they knew the limits pushed them as far as possible. They were, though, very well behaved outside of the Saturday school, when I was worried they would be a nightmare. In truth, they probably just got bored inside as there is little to do at the best of times, the work was boring and there were no other students except the younger Labraya. Matthew went back in the room and was better behaved. The both of them eventually finished their work, or at least attempted to. It wasn't necessarily correct but they at least made a better effort to get the work done.

Labraya's aunt came and asked her if she enjoyed Saturday school. Labraya said 'No' and was sure to reinforce it. I cannot really blame her because there were only three students in, and nothing to do. We needed to make more of an effort to plan activities, but especially with the swine flu outbreak, it was difficult to make arrangements for numbers.

After Labraya left the behaviour of Matthew and Julian deteriorated and Julian managed to break a globe we had bought. I covered up for Julian and probably should not have because they needed to have accountability for their actions. Eventually they calmed down and Matthew actually vacuumed the floor in the end. He was complaining the whole time, but at least he made an effort.

When I was leaving, I mentioned I could not come the next week. Kamili looked put out because she could not come either, and Kemi had not been around for a while. Getting people to volunteer was at times a real issue.

11.7.09

I could not attend for a couple of weeks due to family commitments but I made sure to be available for the rescheduled trip to the Nature Centre. The students who attended were Sharama, Labraya, Tamika and a new girl Shereen in my car, along with Chris; and Caleb and his cousin were in a car with Kamili and Kemi. The girls sat in the back of my car and were chatting all the way to the Nature Centre. Labraya was being a little pushy and teasing the other girls because she had been to the centre before. It was nothing serious but Tamika told her off a few times. In terms of discipline, I always try to let it the students police themselves before stepping in. We played *I Spy* in the car and there was some difficulty with the youngest of them (Sharama was only four and Shereen five) getting the concept. We made it work and eventually got to the Nature Centre in good spirits.

When we got into the place we were allowed to eat in the front reception, though the staff at the venue were a little reluctant. I was surprised, however, that the kids managed to be really well behaved. They realised that they were representing Saturday school and they caused no problems, even cleaning up after themselves. Kemi was fascinated by the displays of animals, while the students were eating. There was one that was a magnifying glass on snake skin and other parts of animals that was particularly interesting.

On our trip we saw quite a few animals. There were separate sections for reptiles, rodents (Kamili was afraid and refused to go in) and insects. There were also otters (who stank), a red panda (more like a fox with a odd looking face) and porcupines. The students really enjoyed the day and were excited about seeing all the different animals. Kamili had one

of them read out some of the information about all the various creatures that was put up by the enclosures. It was good to see the students enjoying themselves and getting the chance to learn to learn about animals close up.

Some of the animals did not look too happy. It was a running theme throughout that they seemed docile and Kemi remarked that maybe they were drugged to keep them that way. The Lynx's were unimpressive and frankly one of them was concerning. We speculated that it may have gone mad as it was marching up and down limping and had an eye missing. Maybe a good lesson to do in the future, could be on animal welfare.

In the car on the way back the children were talking about the animals and their favourite seemed to be the red panda. They had a very good day by all accounts and were quick to tell their parents when they saw them. If this had not been the last session we would have had them write up some their experiences the following week and maybe even write a letter to the centre about the condition of the Lynx's.

Kamili mentioned that there might be a summer school, but was unsure about the funding, which they had so far not received from the council. It was apt that the issue of funding would arise again in the last session. Unable to get funding the summer did not run that year because of not having the money from the state: one of the oldest problems in the history of Black supplementary education.

Conclusion

The above research diary details my experiences of teaching in the Lumumba Saturday School over a period of seven months. The purpose of these 'thick descriptions' (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) has been to offer the reader as full an account as possible of my experiences in the Lumumba project in order to explore the possibilities of a reconfigured Black radicalism emerging from an independent space of Black education. Therefore,

throughout the research diary I have attempted to offer critical reflections of my experiences and relate them to the wider theory of Black radicalism presented in the earlier chapters. It is hoped that the key features of the organisation of the school and relationships and practices forged within it have outlined the space as one where Black radical thought and praxis can develop. My overwhelming feeling from being a part of the programme is that though there are a number of barriers within, and challenges facing the Lumumba school, it is a resource with much potential for developing a Black radical and independent education. The abiding feeling that came across from interactions with the parents and children was the need that they felt for an educational space that allowed for an exploration of contemporary issues facing the Black people in Britain, that was at the same time given an historical and global context. Due to the overtly Pan-African ethos of the Uhuru organisation, the presumed Black studies element of the curriculum was a key factor in why a number of parents chose to bring their children to the Lumumba school. An in depth case study of a particular site cannot be generalised to a wider population, however, the point of the research was not to discern and represent the level of commitment to Black radical independent education within Black communities in Britain as a whole. Rather the aim was to explore the potentiality of an emergent Black radicalism within the specific site of the Lumumba school, through the medium of Black independent education. The challenge now becomes to take the lessons learnt from my experiences in the Lumumba forward in attempting to create Black radical education within the specific site of the Lumumba school and other locations.

My experiences in the Lumumba School, then, gave me key insights into the workings of and challenges facing the supplementary school project and also provided me the opportunity to put the theory of Black radicalism to a practical test within the community. The next chapter presents a thematic analysis of the issues involved arising from the study and the challenges of developing a Black radical independent education in the future.

Chapter 7

Lessons from the Lumumba

I like Saturday because it is ours. We can be ourselves here

Caleb[21]

Introduction

In the previous chapter a detailed account of my experiences in the Lumumba Saturday School were presented. These experiences provided numerous insights both into the issues facing the Black supplementary school movement, as well as the potential role that Black radicalism could play in both the present and future. This chapter will firstly discuss a number of lessons learnt from the Lumumba school and how they relate to the Black supplementary school movement in general. Secondly, the chapter will outline some of the challenges for the future of Black supplementary schools taken from my experiences in the Lumumba school. It will be argued that Black supplementary schools are as necessary as when first conceived, despite a decline in attendance, and can lay the foundation for a Black radical independent education.

Successes of the programme

Relationships

Relationships played a key role in how the Lumumba school functioned. Strong relationships were possible in part because of low student numbers and a small body of staff, which meant that we were able to build a rapport with the students. We engaged with the students and talked about issues other than simply the work. We also took them on trips and frequently and informally spoke with their families. It was clear who was in charge in the

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[21] Male student of Lumumba school, aged 8

classroom, but there was also room for the students to relax and enjoy the experience with their teachers. This is far from the practice of all Black supplementary schools and from the interviews carried out in my Masters research, in fact, this may not be the norm (Andrews, 2007). In the more official programmes, professional teachers are often used and can prefer to maintain similar relationships as in a conventional classroom.

In one of the Saturday school programmes that I observed in 2007 there was a teacher who even took a more extreme disciplinarian approach than would be found in the strictest of mainstream schools. This teacher believed that schools needed to return to the old school values that they used to have in Jamaica, with ultimate respect being given to the teacher. His preferred method of teaching was ruling the classroom with an iron fist. From my experience this is not an uncommon position within the Black community, where there is much pining for the "good old days" of discipline in schools. A fine example of this is when a local radio presenter had the chance to interview David Cameron in 2008. Instead of questioning him about his regressive plans for the Black community, the DJ ranted on the problems of the lack of respect in Black youth and appealed to the Conservative to bring back the cane if he ever got into office. He argued,

> Kids… have no respect for any authority at all starting with the schools, with no respect for their teachers, they've no respect for their parents and they've no respect for… the police… it's because they've got no fear. I mean the cane used to instil fear in children (Panorama, 2008)

This position is the antithesis of the relationships that were created in the Lumumba school and rests on a wholly different set of beliefs about the Black community. If we follow the argument of lack of discipline being the problem, then we come back to the unfortunate position of blaming ourselves for the problems in the community. The argument is being made that if Black youth had the correct level of respect beaten into them at school, or in the

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home, they would not be in the position they are and all would be well for the future in the community. Our approach at the Lumumba school did not see the students as deviants who needed to be controlled.

Partly due to our age and roles, myself and Kamili being below 26 and Kemi being a parent, we took an approach that involved engaging the students. There were times when more strict discipline was called for and there were many occasions when voices were raised and children reminded that though we were not in a mainstream classroom, the teachers were still in control. However, we attempted a much more interactive teaching method that allowed students to engage with the process. We encouraged discussions and students felt comfortable to talk about issues of racism and experiences they had in school. From my perspective, this is one of the key successes of the Lumumba school. The students liked coming to the programme, which is important for anything held on a Saturday, and they liked seeing the teachers. There is certainly, however, one issue in particular that arose from this more open student-teacher relationship that needs to be considered, especially when working with children, which is discipline.

Discipline

Central to critical pedagogy is a flattening out of the authority in the student-teacher relationship (Freire, 1972). Creating a dialectic relationship is key in forming a student-teacher, teacher-student compact. A Freirian model serves as the foundation for much critical pedagogy, but it should not be ignored that it is based on his work with teaching adults and therefore represents different challenges than when working with young people. The traditional student-teacher relationship is more open to challenge in adult education because of the nature of the audience. In my experience, the expectations are different when working with adults because of two reasons: age and motivation.

Age cannot be underestimated. In adult education the students may be older than, or of a similar age to the teacher, which would greatly facilitate breaking down the traditional relationship because of social codes. The figure of the harsh disciplinarian breaking out the cane is not one that is evoked when teaching adults. In this arena it would be unacceptable to treat your social equal in such a way. Freire's (1972) concern with the dialectical approach is aimed at the use of knowledge in pedagogy and challenging the traditional figure of the teacher holding absolute knowledge and bestowing information into the students. Discipline becomes an important issue when working with young people, in a collaborative way. Maintaining control of the classroom is vitally important, which is not such an issue in adult education.

Another reason discipline and control of the setting are not so important in adult education is the motivation of adults to learn. Adult education is not compulsory, so people are only in the classroom if they choose to be. This motivation makes it less likely for there to be behavioural transgressors in the learning environment. In school settings the compulsory nature of the learning means that some students do not want to be in the classroom and therefore act out. Supplementary schools are not compulsory in the same way as mainstream schools, but it is often not the child's choice to attend. Labraya's mother made this clear to me when I asked her about whether her daughter enjoyed coming to the Lumumba school: 'it doesn't matter, she hasn't got a choice' was her reply. Perhaps the main reason for the younger age range of Black supplementary school attendees, usually between 4 and 12 (Mirza & Reay, 2000), is because of this issue of choice. When they are in primary school children have little option but to go where their parents want them to. However, when they are older and do not need adult supervision they are able to have more freedom over their weekend activities. In my time at the Lumumba school there was only ever one student over the age of 12. He came in the first week I was there, was bored and never came back. The

prospect of more learning on the weekends is not the greatest attraction to young people and Kamili cited other options, such as dance classes, as reasons why numbers had declined for the younger age groups. The point here is that in supplementary school settings it is not necessarily the students choice to be there (this is one of the reasons that good relationships with teachers and students are important). This adds to the need for strong discipline in the educational setting.

Throughout my time at the Lumumba school the need for strong discipline was evident constantly. There were particular students who were more challenging than others, who would constantly test the boundaries of acceptability in the classroom. Mark, the worst behaved student, had only just started school and he was clearly not used to the boundaries of the classroom. We had to spend a lot of time working on his behaviour, so that he respected the other students and teachers alike. There was no prospect of making him a student-teacher in a dialectical sense because of these problems with discipline (as well as age). With the approach that we took in the classroom we allowed the students more leeway than others might have, and whilst this worked to allow for greater freedom of expression of the students, it also at times led to them getting excited and unruly. For example, group discussions would sometimes end up in all the students wanting to say something, relevant or not, at the same time and we would have to stop the session to reiterate the rules of respecting everyone's opinion. Other times we would play games with them at lunch time and then when it came time to do work again the students would be reluctant to not only work but see us again as authority figures and they would challenge us by not complying with our requests. At these times we had to reinforce our role in authority by removing the games, telling them off and sometimes punishing them with less "fun" work than we had planned. When working with children the issue of discipline is central to a well functioning teaching environment. Some, as mentioned above, go to the extreme and make discipline the centre point of their

relationship with students. The strict disciplinarian approach does not fit with a more critical pedagogical stance on teaching. This is a very important point because the relationships not only define the teaching style but are directly linked to the foundation of knowledge upon which teaching itself is based upon.

Political education

It is possible to have a strict disciplinarian teacher whose lessons are all about instilling Black radical theory into the students. We could fill the empty receptacles of their minds with the "correct" ideology necessary to produce a set of Black radical students. The problem here is that the goal of Black radicalism should be a political education and not a political indoctrination. Central to Black radical theory is a challenge to dominant epistemologies. The role of elite and dominant knowledge claims must be critiqued in any radical praxis. The production and uncritical assimilation of elite knowledge is key to understanding how racism is reproduced unthinkingly in society. As explained in Chapter Four, Freire's attritional model of education argues knowledge and understandings are passed down from elite centres through the teachers and into the students (Gergen & Wortham, 2001). Common sense understandings are then the reproduction of knowledge produced in elite centres for the benefit of the dominant. If this mechanism is one of the most fundamental tools for the continuance of an oppressive society, it is unconscionable to think that we would replicate it in order to defeat it. Black radical education should not be dogmatic and repressive but rather should seek to engage and produce students and teachers who are critical and political. Our role should be to involve students in a critique of society that gives them a commitment to act to transform the conditions they face. Fostering a communicative relationship with young people in the Lumumba school was therefore central to creating a progressive Black independent education. We should avoid dogmatic preaching in our pursuit

of a Black radical education and not shy away from our commitment to a *dialectic* approach to learning. In Chapter Five, a critique of participatory action research (PAR) focused in part on the lack of input from the researcher. PAR turns the research entirely over to the community and the researcher is a facilitator of critique. From my experience of critical pedagogy this is also often the case. Our role cannot be to simply spark a debate and to encourage a critical analysis; in a dialectical relationship we have a responsibility to engage students, or the community, with our theoretical and political position. We must avoid dogma, but by not engaging with our own position we collude in the dogma of silence. Unwittingly what occurs is that we end up supporting the status quo if our goal is to 'assist social-justice-oriented individuals in organising to actively do something' (Milner, 2008: pg.339). Change requires politics, and politics requires ideology. If we believe in radical change we must endorse a radical ideology. Therefore our ultimate goal should be to produce students who can critique society and the political position from which we present our education. Black independent education must be overtly Black radical in its standpoint, but allow for the challenge and critique of the student. We must believe that our position is correct and that our students will endorse it, but by constantly allowing it to be challenged we are forced to reinvent and keep our theory accountable. It is on this theme of the nature of what is taught that I will now turn to another success of the Lumumba Saturday school: its curriculum.

Curriculum

One of the main reasons that parents bought their children to the Lumumba school was for the Black history aspect of the curriculum. It must be acknowledged that this was partly due to reputation, rather than practice. When I began teaching there was little Black history being taught. However, the Black history aspect goes beyond simply the issue of what

subjects are being taught. When you go into the classroom at the Lumumba school you are struck by messages of Blackness in the posters on the walls (of African kingdoms to local events), and the collection of books. Blackness and Black history is an unspoken feature regardless of the lessons. When we did organise the teaching programme we felt it essential to formalise the Black history sessions by producing work the students could take with them and having discussions about the issues arising from studying Blackness. The students looked forward to the sessions and it was a central motivation for parents, who also engaged with the information that we discussed.

Chapter Four discussed an important cleavage in supplementary schools that has developed over the issue of curriculum and the question of Black history. It has often been seen as an either/or proposition of Black history and mainstream lessons like Maths and English (Stone, 1981). As a self-help project and with the reputation of the Uhuru Organisation it would be easy to get the impression that Black history would be prioritised over all else. In fact, at a community event when I bought up teaching in the Lumumba school with someone running a market stall, he responded with 'you can't get a job by learning about Africa'. The assumption that Black history would overrun all else turned out to be entirely incorrect, in relation to the Lumumba school. The mornings were dedicated completely to doing either school work, or work that came from mainstream curricula. There was a significant emphasis on basic skills and on succeeding in school and it was never considered that we dropped teaching Maths, English and Science. The idea was to teach the students as much as possible about as many topics as we could, but never to lose sight of the importance of Black history and wider discussions of Blackness.

The studying of Blackness and mainstream work do not need to be mutually exclusive. This is one of the hardest arguments to have with proponents of the "official" set up of supplementary schools. In my experience there is often a quick denunciation of the

study of Black history and more political and critical education. The sentiment from this group is well captured in Stone (1981: pg.246), who argues that 'left wing teachers have done more harm to Black children'. Her contention is that students need to get qualifications to succeed and therefore everything should be organised around this principle. This anti-Black studies approach misses two key aspects. Firstly, that though the emphasis in some self-help projects (though the Lumumba school cannot stand as evidence for all), is not on school grades, this does not mean that there is no commitment to improving the skills that students need to succeed. This should not come as a surprise as the primary motivation for the formation of supplementary schools was that Black children were not given a fair chance in mainstream schools (Best, 1991; Dove, 199; Stone, 1981). When a supplementary school is committed to a 'holistic' approach to education, as Menelik describes, it is not necessary to spell out that this includes teaching basic skills necessary for school success. Discussion of supplementary schools should be based on their practice, not on the impressions we get from the people who run them. So whilst Menelik will not talk up the idea of succeeding in schools, the practice of the Lumumba school clearly helps children to succeed in the mainstream. Secondly, the notion of the competing sides of mainstream and self-help is based on an outdated conception of the self-help programmes being in a conflictual relationship with the state.

Supporting the schools

The history of the Lumumba school is a testament to the fractious relationship between Black supplementary schools and the state that existed in the earlier years of the movement. Stone (1981: pg.174) testifies to this tension when explaining that,

Saturday schools are tolerated so long as they appear to be fulfilling a specific need, i.e. building language skills, and so long as a form of control can be exercised on what happens in the schools

Especially regarding self-help projects the state did not at first embrace Black supplementary schools. Some of the rhetoric about the early supplementary schools that emerges when talking to Menelik and others is, then, of an anti-school nature. Indeed in conversation with Henry he revealed how they used to teach radical material like Marxist Leninism and that this upset some school teachers. This radical anti-school approach, in my opinion, was much more complicated in the past and is a myth today.

In the past, whilst there was conflict with local councils and radical teachings extolling seizure of the state, supplementary schools were still oriented around helping students succeed in mainstream schools. Learning to read, write and do maths and science are helpful to not only get good grades but also for the revolution. So whilst support may not have been explicit it was always implicit. Also, the radical discourse on mainstream education, that I have witnessed, has been that the schools are corrupt by their nature but you need to use them as a tool to succeed. As a participant in my 2007 study, Jason explained, 'we have to equip the students to survive the schools'. So students were encouraged to get through the schools, not to overturn them.

In the present day the conflictual relationship with the state has all but disappeared. Supplementary education has been accommodated into local educational policy by the providing of funds and protocols (Andrews, 2007; Best, 1991). Even the more radical self-help projects like the Lumumba school receive some state funds. There are no longer the pitched battles with heads of the local council that used to occur. In the Lumumba school the mainstream certainly came in for criticism, but effort was made to encourage students in

schools. The message of survival was key. Central to this discourse is that to get through school the students need something that they cannot get from the mainstream (Chevannes & Reeves, 1989). The all Black atmosphere where students can talk openly about racism and their problems in schools helps to keep the students on track. Without the forum that the Saturday school provided it is unlikely that the students would have had the opportunity to raise some of the issues and conversations that came up during the Black history sessions. There were a number of times when students would bring up issues of racism they were dealing with. Caleb once spoke about being one of the only Black kids in his year and how this made him feel the need to fight the other students in his school, when they called him racist names. We were able to discuss as a group why he felt that way and a better way for him to deal with his frustrations. We used the Black history curriculum to get him to think of heroes he could identify with and what they would have done. Interactions like these must have been valuable to Caleb in dealing with school and again, worked to keep him on track in the mainstream. Kamili was constantly preaching about the need to do well in school, so that the students could get good jobs. Kemi, is more extreme in her political views than Kamili and more quick to denounce the system, but the same messages of doing well in school were promoted by her on a regular basis. The mainstream was critiqued on the one hand, acknowledging student experiences, and then support and guidance was offered on how to overcome their problems. What cannot be underestimated in this regard is the most unique and central benefit of Black supplementary schools: the Black-led environment.

Black-led environment

As Reeves & Chevannes (1983b: pg.8) reported of their Black supplementary school programme the 'fraternity of colour is an important aspect of the school's success in pupils eyes'. This was due to the absence of the issues of racism that existed in mainstream schools

and the ability to talk about topics of race and racism. Students in the Lumumba school talked about the classroom as their own space, with Caleb proclaiming 'I like Saturday school because it is ours. We can be ourselves here.' The all Black nature of the classroom meant that we could address issues and talk about Blackness without having to filter, or make allowances for other groups. I particularly found this a positive aspect because when talking about issues such as slavery and racism you need to be careful with the language you use. For instance, if talking to a group of students about how Paul Bogle in Jamaica wanted to drive all the Whites into the sea, there are more issues raised when addressing White children in the classroom. Also resentment can be stirred up when talking about the horrors of slavery, between different racial groups in the class. When talking about slavery in an all Black environment there is a different dynamic, which cannot be overlooked. From a teacher's perspective there is no need to avoid offence. This should not be taken to mean that anything goes and that we spend the session "cursing Whitey", but it does allow a certain level of freedom to discuss. The topic of enslavement is important as it is central to understanding issues of Blackness in the UK.

Do you remember the days of slavery?[22]

As much as I have used Black in the Diasporic sense, to speak of all those of African Ancestry, there are different ethnically Black groups. The area where the research was carried out has historically seen little migration of people directly from Africa until relatively recently.[23] When we talk about the history of Black people in the city, it has primarily (though not entirely) been African Caribbean people who have formed the communities and the groups. This is no different with Saturday schools, which are predominantly run by the

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[22] Burning Spear (1975) Slavery Days, *Marcus Garvey,* Island Records.
[23] For the purposes of anonymity the location of the research is being excluded, and therefore there is no reference provided for this piece of information, as it could prejudice the identity of the location.

African Caribbean community, and certainly no different with the Lumumba School and the Uhuru Organisation. In the Lumumba school every single student and family had their origins in the Caribbean. In one sense this makes the discussion and the learning about enslavement paramount, because we are all descended from enslaved Africans; they really are our stories. In the case of the Black radical position the Diaspora is key and there is an explicit attempt to connect back to the continent (Carmichael, 1971). Therefore the discussion of enslavement is tied into Africa and there is a point made to talk about Africa before European involvement. An issue for future research here could be whether the ties that some Black people in the West are building to the continent of Africa are reciprocal. For example, the history of African history is as central to the mission of the Uhuru Organisation as that of enslaved Africans in the Caribbean (hence naming the Saturday school after Congo's Patrice Lumumba). From my perspective as a teacher in the school, and a Black radical theorist, I count the history of Africans in the continent as my own and identify with it in the same way as with the stories from the Caribbean. The question arises, then, as to whether this is the same with those with a Pan-African view from the continent. Is the story of enslavement as central as colonialism if the setting is a group of Congolese students? From the history of Black radicalism and the feedback loop of ideas, most notably with Marcus Garvey's influence on African freedom fighters (see Chapter One), it would seem the connections are there. It is beyond the scope of the present study but future work should explore the connections of Africans to the Diaspora. For now it is enough to say that the study of enslavement was essential in the Lumumba school and one of the most challenging but also rewarding topics.

My time in the Lumumba school demonstrated that it is impossible to have any kind of understanding of Black history without a good grounding in the story of the enslavement of African people. Enslavement is the hub through which everything connects and follows.

On the simplest level, the question of "why are there Black people in England?" for example, cannot be answered without reference to enslavement. What was clear from working with the students in the school was that they knew very little about enslavement. Admittedly they were young, all in primary school, but even the older students had very limited knowledge of the history. My own experience of school and the accounts of the students all indicate that the study of enslavement is not something many have encountered in the mainstream. Considering the centrality of the enslavement of Africans to the foundation of modern Britain (Walvin, 2001) it is reprehensible that the study of enslavement is not mandatory in school. In reality this may be a blessing in disguise, as judging by the "celebrations" of the bicentenary of the Abolition of the Slave Trade Act, this is not a topic that we should welcome the mainstream schools teaching (Harris et al, 2007). The Black-led space is perhaps the perfect environment for teaching about the history of enslavement, though this proposition does ghettoise the legacy of enslavement to Black people, when in truth it is equally as important to the understanding of everyone in British society.

The opportunity to teach about a topic like enslavement to a group of young people in the Black-led environment is an example of a priceless feature of Black supplementary schools. When we talked about other parts of history the students kept asking about enslavement, they were eager to know. In teaching about enslavement, however, we need to be careful how we explain the issues. It is easy to fall into the trap of painting the process as passively involving Africans accepting the fate of their White masters. There was an occasion where Julian questioned why the Africans did not fight back and 'kill them [Whites] in their sleep'. There is a long history of rebellions to enslavement and this should be the focal point of how we teach about the history of enslavement. The story of enslavement should be one of sadness, but also pride. We were not made powerless in the process, our power was stolen from us at the barrel end of a gun but that did not stop people from fighting back to liberate

themselves and our people. We must also not make the mistake of limiting Black history to enslavement, making sure to explore pre-colonial Africa and to connect enslavement into today's society. By making connections with the past we can understand the present, and the students were quick to link in their lessons about enslavement to their awareness of racism.

Caleb in particular always connected our Black history lessons to feelings of injustice about society today. This is essential, but we also have to be careful here not to stoke the anger of students in the sessions, too much. Whilst there is a fundamental connection with the enslavement of Africans to our role in society today, the nature of discrimination has changed. White people are not the enemy and if we send out the students believing that they are we will not make things better, but worse for them in schools. Again, it is a misconception that I have encountered on numerous occasions that the lessons of the Lumumba school are about hating White people and stirring up anger. I can categorically deny that this is what happens in the Lumumba school. Any anger or resentment was discouraged and instead the students were encouraged to use the teaching positively to gain pride in themselves. Due to the nature of the case study research, it is possible that the Lumumba school is not typical of self-help projects. However, it has one of the longest traditions and most radical reputations of any project that I am aware of. More to the point, is that the practice we developed in the Lumumba school demonstrates that we can teach about sensitive subjects honestly and without sending the students into fits of violence and resentment.

Challenges facing Black supplementary schools

Along with lessons learnt from the practice in the Lumumba school my time teaching in the programme also bought up a number of challenges facing Black supplementary schools, and the prospects of a Black independent education.

Structure

One of the historical complaints about self-help supplementary school programmes is that they lack a formal structure (Stone, 1981). Self-help programmes are organised in a number of ways, from groups of concerned parents to organisations like Uhuru. There is often nobody involved who has any formal experience of teaching and so it is unsurprising that there may be issues around how activities are structured. In the case of the Lumumba school I was surprised at the lack of a discernible structure from the first visit. Being one of the longest running supplementary schools, I expected a very clear structure to be in place. Until we instituted the Black history sessions in the afternoon, there was no real plan as to what to do with the day. The students would arrive and we would find them some work until lunch and then maybe do some activity or carry on with more mainstream school work. My sister likened it to babysitting because we just seemed to be watching the children for large parts of the sessions. In the case of the Lumumba school there are particular reasons for this, with the person who had run the classes leaving a couple of weeks before I arrived. No lesson plans were left behind and it was also unclear, initially, who was in charge. Eventually we developed a structure that included the mainstream work in the mornings and Black history in the afternoon. However, the work in the morning was still loosely structured. There were few lessons, it was more a case of helping the students through either homework or work in textbooks, and sometimes we were struggling to find things for them to do. Speaking of my own experience, not having knowledge of what they were studying and what the students should know made it difficult to set work for them. The benefits of more official programmes with qualified teachers are obvious, in this regard. However, we worked with what we had and got the students involved in picking out work and bringing in their homework. We made efforts to ask them what they needed help with, and we managed to usually find appropriate work that they could do.

In the case of the Black history lessons they were purposefully run in an unstructured way, with the history being told with students free to ask questions and the other teachers also interjecting where we felt necessary. This was beneficial as it allowed the process to be a discussion with the students able to participate. A more formal structure could have prevented some of the openness that was displayed from coming out. However, some of the lessons, for example about Queen Nzinga, were perhaps too unstructured with the information not necessarily being entirely accurate. Detailed lesson plans would certainly have helped in this regard. Overall, the best was done with the experience, knowledge and time at our disposal.

It should also be noted that the experience of the Lumumba school is not indicative of the practice of all self-help projects. In fact, the Lumumba school itself has a history of strong lesson plans and organisation at different times in the history of the programme. One weekend I helped to clean up a store cupboard in the project and found a bundle of old lesson plans and registers. From talking to parents, some of whom had been to the Lumumba school as children, it became clear that things had been more structured in the past as they spoke of high levels of planning and organisation. It appears as though the main determiner for levels of structure and organisation in the programme has been the people who are willing to volunteer as staff members. If there are people with experience of education they bring this to bear when working in the supplementary school. To overcome some of the issues of lack of structure we need to try to bring in as many people as possible to help out, which ties into another issue of structure that limited the Lumumba school: absence of a staff rota.

My sister was very keen at first to volunteer in the Lumumba school. However, after a few sessions she became disinterested because it was too much time out of her Saturday (10am-2.30pm) as she works a full week. She suggested that there could be some sort of rota drawn up where you either volunteer for the morning or afternoon, or maybe only work every other weekend so that it did not take out too much time from the week. The issue of the rota

is a chicken and egg scenario where you can only have a rota when you have enough people, but you can only keep enough volunteers by having a rota. When we first came to the Lumumba school there were three other teachers, presenting the opportunity for creating a rota. However, the other two teachers stopped coming within two weeks of us volunteering. The challenge is to encourage people to get involved and perhaps outlining reduced commitments through a rota system could work as an inducement. Credit must go to the volunteers who make supplementary schools work. The Lumumba school could not have functioned without the commitment of Kamili who came in early and left late every week to make sure that the students had a place to learn. For future developments in supplementary schools we should find ways to support those who put forth the endeavour. Perhaps training could be instituted for those who wish to work in supplementary schools to help with creating lessons plans and structuring the environment.

Coordination

Preventing the development of initiatives such as a training scheme for volunteers in Black supplementary schools has been the traditional isolation of the programmes (Reay & Mirza, 1997). In my earlier study of Black supplementary schools I found that though there were a number of programmes in the city, they were disconnected and difficult to find (Andrews, 2007). This lack of connections makes catering for the needs of volunteers and students more difficult than if there was a network where different programmes could coordinate. At no time whilst I was at the Lumumba school was there contact with or from any of the other programmes in the city. We could have collaborated on trips and perhaps even on the issue of using volunteers. The nature of how supplementary schools come into existence, with concerned members of the community starting up programmes, lends itself to isolated groups. Building networks to connect the endeavours could greatly support the work

that is done. It is refreshing to have recently discovered the creation of the National Association of Black Supplementary Schools (NABSS). NABSS (2008) explains that they were set up to

> be a central resource for parents, members and helpers of the Afrikan/Caribbean descent community to find help with their children's education in their locality

NABSS also explain how they were constituted to fill the need of connecting disparate supplementary school groups together. Their website provides resources that can be used for teaching, as well as links to groups who can act as potential workshop coordinators for lessons. There is also a directory of supplementary school programmes set up for different cities in the country. As yet the directory does not include the city where research was carried out and future work in this locality should involve connecting the Black supplementary schools in the area to the NABSS. Further work on Black supplementary schools must take a full account of the work and potential of NABSS, which is beyond the limitations of the present study. The NABSS (2008) website did highlight the key problem facing the development of the Black Supplementary school movement. They have encapsulated the key concern in their stated objective to 'make sure the excuse of "I can't find a supplementary school" is no longer valid'.

Decline in attendance

The biggest issue facing Black supplementary schools is the decline in attendance. In my initial study of the sector in the city it was clear that the peak of supplementary school attendance was in the late seventies to early nineties (Andrews, 2007). My time at the Lumumba school has reiterated these findings. As earlier reported, the most students we saw in the project at any one time was eleven and often the numbers were closer to five or six.

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Menelik reported that in the peak years there were up to fifty students in attendance each week, with them needing to use multiple rooms to accommodate them. Old registers from the eighties confirm these numbers. The attendance of the Lumumba school at the time of the study represents a significant decline from the heyday of the programme.

In discussions with Kamili and Kemi they advanced various reasons for the lack of numbers. Kemi put forward the main argument that it was the state of the building that deterred people from attending the Lumumba school. The Uhuru Organisation building is certainly in need of repair and as a parent she explained it put her off bringing her children to the programme. There was also the problem she explained with advertising, as NABSS complained people often do not know about the supplementary schools in their area, preventing them from attending. In the case of the Lumumba school, however, the argument of ignorance is less valid. As one of the longest running supplementary programmes in existence it is very well known in the local area and has a radio advert on Black radio stations. The Uhuru Organisation is also very well known, making the supplementary school very highly visible in the locality. Kamili focused on the opportunities available for children on the weekends that were not present in the past. She frequently spoke of students telling her they were at dance class, or doing some other activity that prevented them from being able to attend. In other words there were more exciting options available to students at the weekend. This argument makes sense, especially when we consider that it has always been an issue getting older students to attend because they are able to choose. If a young child has the choice of going to do more school or dancing there is probably little difficultly in making a decision. Whilst these issues more than likely impact the reduction in numbers of students I would argue that there are deeper issues facing Black supplementary schools and to understand them we have to look back to why they were formed in the first instance.

The motivation for Black supplementary schools came from the utter failure of state schools to provide for Black school students (Dove, 1993). There was no debate in the sixties and seventies in the Black community about whether schools were working. There existed a consensus that the mainstream was not enough, exemplified by the work of more traditionally Black liberal writers such as Stone (1981: pg. 175), who explains that 'West Indian parents and their adolescent children have very little faith in the British school system'. To fully appreciate the mood of critique in the school system, at this time, a collection of essays revisiting Bernard Coard's seminal work, *Tell it Like it Is: How Our Schools Fail Black Children* (2007) is a good starting point. The point here is that the need for supplementary schools was not in doubt during the peak of attendance; it was taken for granted that racism was endemic and that Black students were not learning the basic skills necessary to succeed in school and, resultantly, life after education. This discourse has fundamentally changed over the years to the position we are in today.

The wealth of attention to the issue of Black achievement in schools and the money spent, has delivered the image of the state actively involved on the community's side to change the system. Over the years Black achievement has risen significantly, allowing large numbers to acquire skills necessary to advance (Steven, 2007). What has also occurred is a change in the discourse from blaming the schools to locating the problem in the "underachievement" of Black students. As discussed in Chapter Four, Chevannes & Reeves (1983a) forewarned of this shift when arguing that "underachievement" was an ideological construction that placed the blame for the low achievement in the cultural deprivation of Black communities. Therefore, it is no longer the racist teacher who is to blame for inequalities in education, but now the abnormal Black family and community environment lacking positive male role models. No longer is the ire of the Black community reserved for the schools, but there is a growing cadre of Black opinion makers who endorse and reproduce

the ideology of Black underachievement and cultural deprivation (for example see Tony Sewell (2009)). The effect of rising standards and a shift in discourse has been to undercut the primary argument for the necessity of supplementary schools: i.e. for parents to get their children an education. In the Lumumba school we can see this in the reasons that parents bring their children. Overwhelmingly the motivation is for the cultural and Black history aspect. It must be remembered though that throughout the history of supplementary schools there has been 'an overriding concern with the teaching of basic skills' (Stone, 1981: pg.186), and this has been driven by what parents expect. When parents have faith that the basic educational needs of their children will be provided by the schools, it appears as though there may be a decline in the popularity of Black supplementary programmes. A key factor for the decline in attendance, it is here argued, is that the parents whose children do attend are the ones interested in a Black curriculum, but the mass popularity of the movement was based on a critique of schooling that is no longer endorsed by the majority. From a Black radical perspective this is problematic for two main reasons.

Firstly, Black studies is important. The neglect of Black history within the school system is reason enough to have Black supplementary schools. What is especially challenging from a Black radical position is how Black studies is perceived, and this ties into the wider work of the Uhuru Organisation. The perceived nature of the Black studies lessons at the Lumumba school is that they are solely cultural and historical and maybe outdated for the needs of the community today. A more detailed critique of the Uhuru notion of Black radicalism will be presented in the concluding chapter, it is enough to say now that a Black political critical education could be created that would benefit the Black community. It is not clear if that would be something that larger numbers would embrace, but it is a challenge for the future of any potential Black radical position to engage the community around Black studies.

Secondly, Gillborn (2008) explains how the rise in standards that has occurred for Black students is somewhat illusory. Whilst achievement for Black students has gone up by all measures, so has the achievement for all other groups. Gillborn argues that the achievement gap has been relatively consistent over the decades and that the position of Black students in the school system, relative to everyone else, is as unequal today as it has ever been. This being the case the primary motivation for the necessity of supplementary schools is as alive today as it ever was in the past. However, due to state action and shifting discourse we as a community have neglected a central feature of our challenge to inequality in the system. This is a good example of what Bell (1992: pg.3) had in mind when writing about inherently racist societies when he argued, what we designate as "racial progress" [in this case improved achievement] is not a solution to that problem. It is a regeneration of the problem in a particularly perverse form'.

Conclusion

My experiences in the Lumumba school brought attention to a number areas of successes in the programme where lessons for the future can be learnt. These include the strengths of the relationships between teachers and students and a mainstream, as well as Black studies curriculum. A number of challenges for the future of the supplementary schools also arose in the form of questions over the structure and coordination of programmes, as well as how to increase declining attendance. Overall, the experiences gained at the Lumumba school have led to the understanding of the Black supplementary school movement as both diverse and having potential. From a Black radical perspective, given the history and tradition of Black supplementary schools in the community, it is certainly possible to deliver a Black independent education that at once critiques and subverts, whilst at the same time helps students to navigate the mainstream school system. What is beyond doubt from the

radical perspective is that such an endeavour is necessary. Though "achievement" may have increased with regard to Black students and schooling, there remains a retrenchment disparity of outcomes that belies racial disadvantage within the system. As a community we cannot expect, and certainly cannot depend, on the system to correct biases that have been in existence since Black children entered the school en masse over forty years ago. It is vital that we both maintain and create educational alternatives that can support Black youth and call the mainstream to account through their success. Black supplementary schools potentially offer such an alternative force of Black radical independent education.

Conclusion

Black Redemption vs. Black Liberation

The greatest weapon used against the Negro is disorganisation

Marcus Garvey[24]

Introduction

  The aim of this study has been to address the research questions 'how can Black radicalism be understood in contemporary society?' and 'how can we use Black radicalism to overcome racial discrimination?'. In this endeavour the first chapter focused on defining Black radicalism as a political ideology that identifies racism at the core of Western society and presents the solution to this as the creation of Black independent institutions and connecting to a wider Diaspora. In the second chapter the dominant accounts of race were critiqued as viewing the concept from "above" and delegitimising the politics of Blackness that lies at the heart of Black radicalism. It was argued that Blackness is fluid, diverse and also essential in challenging the structures of racism. Chapter Three focused on the inherent problem within Black radicalism, that of authenticity. A drift has occurred towards cultural authenticity, which has lead to a certain cultural nationalism in Black alternative politics and also in popular understandings of Blackness. From a Black radical position, authenticity is achieved by a commitment to the uplift of Black people as a community and is defined in political action rather than cultural performance. The last of the theoretical chapters outlined a Black radical position on schooling, and highlighted Black supplementary schools as potential vehicles for a Black independent education that could serve the community and challenge mainstream school orthodoxy. A methodological foundation of a Black radical sociology was then presented and discussed, and the empirical portion of the thesis outlined.

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[24] Garvey (1986/1923: pg.10)

A Black radical participatory ethnography of a longstanding self-help Black supplementary school programme, the Lumumba school, was undertaken that involved myself working as a teacher in the project over a period of seven months. My experiences and interactions in the Lumumba school and also the wider Uhuru organisation are presented above in the form of an annotated research diary to give the reader a complete an understanding as possible of the process of the research. Following this exposition was a series of lessons learnt from the research in the Lumumba school, which tied into the future and potential of the Black supplementary school movement. It was argued that the movement presented the possibility of developing a comprehensive Black radical independent education that could at once challenge mainstream schooling, whilst at the same time shepherding students through it.

Below, the ethical considerations of the study will be explored, followed by a discussion of the challenge that a Black radical position presents for any Black "intellectual". From the process of the research a key cleavage in terms of Black radical thought has been identified as the difference between Black redemption and Black liberation. This distinction lies at the heart of Black radical thought and will be outlined and discussed below. Finally, it will be argued that the vehicle for a cohesive Black radical movement that engages not only the school system can be found in the reappropriation of Malcolm X's (1970) idea of the Organisation of African American Unity.

Ethical considerations

One of the main methodological ethical considerations for my research has been the anonymity of the participants. Pseudonyms have been used for all the people and places involved in order to maintain the anonymity necessary in the research. However, the history of the Uhuru organisation and the Lumumba school mean that anyone reading the research with knowledge of either, in all probability will be able to discern the location of the Saturday

school. For this reason I have attempted to also keep the precise location of the research anonymous. Anonymity is an important feature of research as it allows for participants to reveal information they may not otherwise be comfortable with. The nature of the present study does not call for any sensitive information to be shared, and the comments on Saturday schools attributed to the teachers and organisers of the Lumumba school are such that they would probably not require anonymity to provide them. However, much of the work involved research with children, some as young as four, and it is important that they anonymity is maintained.

There may also be ethical issues raised by the teaching of African enslavement and discussion of racism. These are not the easiest subjects to address with young children and if not taught sensitively could cause distress. These considerations were foremost in the planning of the lessons on my part, and the participatory nature of the classes meant that we were able to discuss any difficulties the students were having with the subject matter. The students were very open during discussions and every effort was made to make sure they were comfortable and reassured.

The most pressing issue of ethical responsibility from a Black radical perspective is to ensure that the research is on the side of the participants. Throughout this work I have made clear my political position and also my commitment to the development of Black supplementary schools. Shining a critical light on the processes of the Lumumba school, however, provides the scope for those against the institution of Black-led spaces to draw their own conclusions and challenge the process. One of the primary objections to conducting research in the Black community has been this very issue. Whatever my motives, the accusation of acting as a "spy" for the system will always have currency. Black supplementary schools, especially the more radical self-help organisations, have benefitted from being out of the mainstream spotlight. This research has, in however small a way,

opened up the processes of Black supplementary education to an audience that may not have its best interests at heart.

Challenge of the Black intellectual

The fundamental challenge of my position, however radical and subversive it may be, is that I cannot escape my role as an "intellectual". In my present location my work is owned by the university and subject to the power of academia. The issue of radicalism and academia has been a contentious one that in the past has seen some who truly wanted to resist feel little choice but to leave the academic world (Burawoy, 2005b). Chapter One presented a critique of critical positions in academia that challenged notions such as Critical Race Theory as "liberal radicalism": i.e. subversive in theory whilst supporting the status quo in practice. When academic work is disconnected from the reality and struggles of the powerless, then no matter how liberatory it may sound it reinforces the power of the dominant. The challenge for the Black intellectual is to justify our position in the academic industry by demonstrating that we can benefit the community from our location.

When designing the present study the benefits to the community were paramount. I was keen to be actively pursuing and producing the action embodied by Black radical theory. Hence, the Lumumba Saturday school was selected for the research, it being one of the least mainstream programmes. The commitment to a participatory research design meant working in the Lumumba school and by doing so I was directly involved in the provision of Black supplementary education for the students that attended. There is no doubt that my presence in the school was beneficial, as the programme needed volunteers and I was able to teach and bring in some Black history resources. However, I could have worked as a teacher in the Lumumba school detached from my position as a researcher. The test of benefit must be

whether the actual process of the research was beneficial to the programme and the wider supplementary school movement.

In one sense it is unquestionable that the research was beneficial: it provided much needed funds to the programme. As part of the study I donated £250 of research grant funding to the Lumumba school. The money was used to buy equipment, books and take the students on educational trips. Menelik also spoke about how the process of research was necessary to see what future challenges were facing the programme, and is looking forward to reading the thesis. The real test of the research will be what occurs after the PhD is submitted. It is incumbent upon me to use the insights gained and take them back to the Lumumba school volunteers, students and parents and try to find ways to build on the programme in the future. I also have a responsibility to work on the wider implications for the Black supplementary schools that have arisen in the research. A good example being the lack of coordination with other projects and the need to create links with groups like the National Association of Black Supplementary Schools. From the in depth study of the Lumumba school there have been numerous issues raised and analysed, which are only useful if they are put to use, not in terms of recommendations to others but in my own practical efforts. This would elevate the work of theory and practice that has been demonstrated thus far into a coordinated praxis. The model of the Black radical intellectual that is being proposed is one who uses the resources of the ivory tower to build and support movements that empower Black communities. Our first responsibility must be to the community and not to academia.

A major limitation of the study is that its usefulness depends largely on my endeavours post-completion, and it is here where the challenge of the Black intellectual manifests. Once the PhD is completed and if I fully enter academia, I will no longer have the freedom to condemn and challenge as my livelihood will depend on maintaining my position.

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When my responsibilities are teaching, presenting at conferences and writing for academic journals it is possible that a fundamental change will occur in my priorities. Not solely because of time restraints, but out of the necessity of competing in the industry of academia, which is set up to separate theory and practice by creating "intellectuals" separate from "activists". The challenge of the Black radical intellectual is not to fall into the trap of "liberal radicalism", providing stinging critiques of the system from the comfort of the ivory tower. Part of the way to do this is to be constantly involved in practice, like supplementary schools, and to use this action to produce knowledge that creates further critique and praxis.

Epistemologically, a limitation with any research based on a case study is the difficulty in generalising findings (Merriman, 1988). However, the emphasis here is on the understandings that can be generated from practical learning. Whilst insights gained will be used to inform the theory of Black radicalism, this is possible because of the dialectic relationship that was produced in the research. My understandings of theory and politics have been influenced by my experiences in the Lumumba school. There is no intent to generalise the empirical, but to use the experiences to inform theory. Any potential generalisations that arise, such as the recommendations for the future of supplementary schools, should be seen as theoretical statements that will be challenged by future practical endeavours.

The validity of the research will undoubtedly be challenged due to the overtly ideological theoretical positioning. The answer to this critique is in two parts. Firstly, by repeating the critique of all research as ideological (see Chapter Five). Striving for objectivity and impartiality is a decision based on a liberal ideological conception of the role of knowledge. The appropriate level of critiques of my position, therefore, is the ideological. To discount the validity of the present research on the basis of its ideological nature would, ironically for the value-avoiding position, be highly dogmatic. Secondly, because of the political nature of the research there is no attempt made to seek validity based on appeals to

value freedom, neutrality or impartiality. From the outset I have embraced and argued for a Black radical politics. One function of this research has been to fully interrogate and understand the theory and practice of Black radicalism by examining the Black supplementary school movement. However, the primary aim of this piece is not simply to understand, but persuade. I have purposely outlined the faults in Black radicalism in order to suggest solutions for moving forward. The entire piece is a construction of Black radical thought meant to convince the reader of the necessity of, and possibilities for an emergent Black radicalism. It is our responsibility to produce a Black radicalism that can create the independent institutions necessary to give power back to Black communities. Herein lies my first contribution towards that end.

Black redemption vs. Black liberation

Over the course of conducting the present research study a fault line in Black radical theory and practice has become apparent. What separates Black radicalism from the Black liberal tradition is the rejection of the mainstream and the resultant embracing of Blackness. However, in embracing Blackness there has historically been a split between cultural nationalists on the one hand and Black radicals on the other (Newton, 1974; Ngozi-Brown, 1997). In today's society this split is manifest in the difference between Black redemption and Black liberation.

Black redemption is the politics of 'loving Blackness' (hooks, 1995; pg.146). Reclaiming Black pride through a process of embracing Blackness has been central to a Black radical critique, embodied in Garvey's slogan 'the Black skin is not a badge of shame but rather a glorious symbol of greatness' (Cronon: 1969: pg.4). The redemptive work through which Blackness has been reclaimed has primarily been psychological and cultural. Cross (1971) talked of the Negro-to-Black conversion where people moved through stages of

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ignorance of Blackness to adopting with a positive, revolutionary Black identity; whilst Rastafarianism is based on returning the mind and body to Africaness (McFarlane, 1998). The politics of redemption is perhaps best summed up in the slogan "Black is beautiful" and was a necessary step for Black people due to the destruction of Blackness during enslavement and colonialism. Black redemption is a central and fundamental force of Black radicalism. Within the Lumumba school the politics of Black redemption were highly evident.

The impact of stepping into the classroom has been noted in Chapter Seven, with the positive images of Africa and strong representations of Blackness. A lot of emphasis was placed on redeeming Blackness in the sessions, when Kamili or Kemi would tell the students to take pride in being Black and find strength within it. The Black history lessons too, formed a redemptive politics where we would teach the history of Black people to instil pride in the students (Graham, 2001). It is also not just for the benefit of the young, with Black studies also being run for adults to engage in their history. The Black-led nature of the learning environment could be seen as redemptive politics, in that it allowed for the students to see Black people in positions of power and therefore redeem Blackness. A major feature of the Uhuru Organisation is connecting Blackness back to Africa and this can be seen in the celebration of Kwanzaa.

Kwanzaa has been discussed in Chapters Three and Six. In the Lumumba school there was no focus on Christmas, rather Kwanzaa and its seven principles. I also attended a Kwanzaa event organised by the Uhuru Organisation in the local community. Chapter Six detailed a discussion between myself and Henry about the effectiveness and purpose of the Kwanzaa celebration. Henry used to be involved with Uhuru and explained that the staunch Black nationalism of the organisation in the past had rejected Kawanzaa outright. Henry had distanced himself from Uhuru precisely because of their shift towards what he perceived as a more cultural nationalist position. It was, therefore, surprising that after the event Henry was

so positive about Kwanzaa. Seeing Black people come together in a positive acclamation of each other was a moving experience for him. It is here where we can see the evolution of the debate towards notions of Black redemption and liberation, and see the need for a combination of the two.

Black liberation refers to the active movement of the community toward changing material conditions. Black liberation is the call for politics and action necessary to destroy the structures of racism, or at least to shield ourselves from them. Revolution is the only logical endpoint of Black liberation. However, the radical claim for Black revolution in the West has been all but rescinded, crushed by the reality that such demands are never going to be met. This represents the fundamental challenge to Black radicalism, the seeming impossibility of the task. Black radical theory of capitalist oppression and racism as inherent to the system, can be akin to staring into an abyss. The problem is so large that it can seem as if there is nothing we can do about it. CRT's approach to this has been to almost bury its head in the sand and say we should march on singing into the fire. Black redemption offers us salvation of the self by taking pride in and expressing our Blackness.

In talking to people about Black radicalism they are often turned off by what they perceive as the negativity of it all. When we argue that society is racist, and things have not necessarily changed for the better over the last four decades, people see us stuck in the past and blaming "Whitey" for our problems. They do not see any hope of redemption, let alone prospects for liberation. The problem with much of the Black radical movement is that we have neglected the difficult questions of how to change society and instead relied on the panacea of a redemptive cultural politics. Black redemption is absolutely necessary to any project of Black liberation, but it cannot be all that we do. There is no use 'loving Blackness' if we do nothing to improve the lives and futures of Black people. The biggest success of Black radicalism has been the reclamation of Blackness and finding redemption in who we

are. The challenge for the future is how to use this redemption to create a movement that can bring significant changes to the position of Black people across the globe.

Conclusion

The Organisation of Black Unity

My experiences in the Lumumba school and working with the Uhuru organisation have demonstrated that the approach of Black radicalism in the West has been too global. Connecting to the Diaspora and the global struggle is the only way that the Black radical argument makes sense, and is what separates it from more liberal Black movements (see Chapter One). However, when we focus too much on the global struggle we lose sight of what needs to be done locally. Malcolm X (1970), whilst being an international statesman saw the need for action at the local level. For him, the idea was to start an organisation that could connect people together locally, whilst tying them into the national and international political movement for Black liberation. Before his death, Malcolm X created the Organisation of African American Unity (OAAU). The organisation was funded by membership from the community and organised around different departments, for instance education, housing and politics. Demonstrating the necessity of both the redemptive and liberatory strands of Black radicalism, Malcolm also included a cultural department because a cultural return to Africa was a central part of his mission (X, 2001/1965). The key was to utilise the power of Black people locally first, in order to improve conditions and build a community capable of mobilising for the wider cause. Malcolm never had the chance to build the OAAU, as he was assassinated in 1965. His idea though is as relevant today as it ever was. If we are going to change the conditions that face Black people we need an Organisation of Black Unity that can organise in different locations and come together nationally to challenge the system. This would involve different departments focused on concrete goals for

the community. There is already a history of Black supplementary education that we need to support and build upon. If we had a department focused on building the supplementary school movement and challenging the system to work better for Black students we could perhaps build a strong educational force. At the same time as working on the local supplementary school we would also be developing and delivering a critical education that would tie the community into the struggle for Black liberation worldwide. When we are disconnected from each other our activities can seem useless, but if we coordinate and build large movements of community action then our small contribution can play a part in delivering wider structural change. The lesson and central thesis of Black radicalism is simple: by coming together as a community of Black people we,

> can move the mountain of oppression; it is our great leap forward and our commitment to the dead and unborn. We will touch God's heart; we will touch the people's heart and together we will move the mountain (Newton, 1974: Pg. 333)

The future of Black radicalism

The aim of this thesis has been to reclaim a Black radical tradition and reconfigure it in a way that can be used in contemporary, twenty-first century Black Britain. It is important therefore to state that such a Black radicalism is a project for the future as much as reflection on the past. The Black radical politics, institutions and nations that are theorised in this work simply do not exist as articulated and this piece should be seen as a call to arms for their development. Back to Black is the title of this work because to create a future for Black people free from racial oppression requires a return to the politics of Blackness. For a number of reasons the Black radical tradition explored in this work has fallen into decline. The opening up of Western society and the 'independence' of the former colonies has cemented the liberal myth that we are moving toward racial progress and equality. The Black radical

argument clearly articulates that this so called progress is a 'regeneration of the problem in a particularly perverse form' (Bell, 1992: pg.3) that blinds us to the nature of racial oppression. The pitfalls of Black radical thought and drift to cultural nationalism has stagnated any potential growth of Black radical politics, and is therefore necessary to reconfigure the Black radical work of the past in the present in order to build our futures as Black people. I have attempted to outline a Black radicalism that is defined in political production rather than cultural production and therefore open enough to be accommodated in contemporary Britain and beyond. Hopefully, the message that a reconfigured Black radicalism is both an essential need and a possible project in Black Britain today has been conveyed by this thesis. I have attempted to provide a theoretical grounding to that Black radicalism, a defence from the critiques of the academy and an explication of how Black radicalism can be articulated on the most local and fundamental of levels. The task now is to build on the foundation that has been provided by those who have gone before to create the emergent, complex and flexible Black radical theory and practice that is essential to transforming the conditions of Black people in both contemporary and future societies.

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