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.

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Black radicalism is one of the most misunderstood political philosophies that exist. Conflated with extremism, narrow versions of nationalism and misogynistic organisations, it has largely been dismissed or overlooked as the "evil twin on the civil rights movement." This talk will recover the legacy of Black radicalism, outlining a tradition that provides a revolutionary alternative to the status quo. He completed his PhD in Sociology and Cultural Studies entitled 'Back to Black: Black Radicalism and the Black Supplementary School Movement' at the University of Birmingham. In 2013, Kehinde published his first book Resisting Racism: Race, Inequality and the Black Supplementary School Movement. He has written books over the past five years including 'Back to Black: Retelling Black Radicalism for the 21st Century' and 'Resisting Racism: Race, Inequality and the Black Supplementary School Movement'. He has also written for publications on both sides of the Atlantic including the Guardian, Washington Post and New Statesman. Writing in the latter last week about Black History Month, he said: 'If schools want to genuinely engage with black history then they can embed it into their teaching. 'For example, rather than teaching the industrial revolution as a tri