

‘A bright future’ for ‘something new and highly significant’ or a bit of a damp squib?: (neo-) Marxist reflections on recent theoretical developments in ‘BritCrit’ in the journal *Race, Ethnicity and Education*

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Abstract

Critical Race Theory (CRT) has a relatively long history in the United States, from where it originated, dating back to the 1980s. Its presence in UK academic literature, however, is more recent, having surfaced in the first decade of the twenty-first century. I focus in this paper on developments in CRT in the UK from January 2012 to January 2018, as part of an ongoing attempt to evaluate CRT from a (neo-) Marxist perspective. My argument is that while ‘BritCrit’ analysis employs (a limited number of) CRT concepts, there is a clear tendency for UK-based Critical Race Theorists to deploy a range of other theoretical perspectives, including Marxism. Thus, a distinctively British CRT has failed to take off in the way its founders had hoped. I speculate that this may well be related to CRT’s inability to theorise the multifarious nature of racism in the UK, specifically those forms of racism that are either non-colour-coded or hybridist.

Keywords: Critical Race Theory, ‘BritCrit’, ‘white supremacy’, (neo-)Marxism, non-colour-coded racism, hybridist racism.

Introduction

In this article, I begin by summarising some of the defining features of Critical Race Theory. I go on to summarise some of the analysis in Cole, 2017a, pp. 41-96. There I evaluated at length from a (neo-) Marxist theoretical perspective¹ developments in Critical Race Theory (CRT) in Britain in the journal, *Race, Ethnicity and Education (REE)* from January 2012 (the date of the special edition of on ‘Critical Race Theory in England’ (*REE*) 15 (1)) up to January 2016 (the date Cole, 2017a went to press). The journal’s editor is David Gillborn, arguably *the* leading UK-based Critical Race Theorist. Since the special of edition of *REE*, published at the beginning of 2012, and which featured seven articles, there have to date been a total of 198 articles on CRT in the journal (correct up to *REE* 21 (1) 2018)². Of these, only six have a UK focus, representing just 3% of the total CRT papers published, over a six year period. In this present article, I summarise my findings in Cole, 2017a before continuing my analysis of ‘BritCrit,’ to use Kevin Hylton’s term to describe a quintessentially *British* CRT,³ up to the present (January, 2018)⁴.

My objectives are twofold: first to further an ongoing (neo-) Marxist critique of CRT, or in this case, ‘BritCrit’⁵; second to address the extent to which CRT is a main focus in the light of other (competing) theoretical perspectives. This latter objective is part of an assessment of the extent to which ‘BritCrit’ has established itself as a discreet entity in its own right. David Gillborn (2011, p. 23) foresaw ‘a bright future’ for ‘BritCrit’. As he put it, referring to the aforementioned London Conference (see endnote 3) in 2009:

[it] signalled that something new and highly significant was happening: the first steps in establishing a self-consciously distinctive approach that seeks to bring together the best of CRT in the States alongside critical anti-racist traditions in the UK (Gillborn, 2011, pp. 22-23)

I suggest that while ‘BritCrit’ uses a (limited) number of key CRT concepts, it employs a variety of other theoretical tools to make its point. Further, I would argue that CRT’s emphasis on colour-coded racism severely impairs its capacity to interrogate the multifarious nature of racism in the UK, that can often be non-colour-coded or hybridist (can be colour-coded or not colour-coded or it is not clear if the racism is related to skin colour or not), and this may well account for the relatively low numbers of ‘BrtCrit’ papers published.

What is Critical Race Theory?

Gillborn and Nicola Rollock (2011) argue that CRT has five central principles. First, Critical Race Theorists promote the view that racism is central, and normal not aberrant; that it can be ‘crude’ but also ‘nuanced’; and that it need not be intentional. From a (neo-) Marxist perspective, there would be agreement that that racism is a normal feature of racialized capitalist societies, that it can be basic and obvious as well as unintentional. However, for Marxists, capitalism relies for its very existence on social class, specifically on the exploitation of one class – the working class – by another – the capitalist class.

Their second principle is that ‘white supremacy’ refers not just to white supremacist hate groups, but to the racism that saturates society as a whole. Indeed it is viewed as a political, economic and cultural system of white control. This control can be conscious or not conscious (Gillborn and Rolloack, 2011). A Marxist response would be that it is capitalism, albeit massively racialized, and indeed gendered, that is the economic, political and cultural system under capitalist control. My own view is that ‘white supremacy’ should be restricted to its narrow usage. This is particularly important, I would argue, in the era of Trump where attempts are being made by alt-right to normalise white supremacy (in its traditional sense), fascism and fascist and fascistic discourse

(Cole, 2018a). I return to the key CRT concept of ‘white supremacy’ throughout this article.

Third, CRT places particular emphasis on the voices and experiences of people of colour, given that their position at the margins of racist society means they will be able to make an especially insightful contribution. CRT scholars’ accounts sometimes take the form of story-telling or counter-narrative and may be allegorical, but they are not made up, but constructed out of the historical, socio-cultural and political realities of their lives and those of people of colour (Ladson-Billings 2006: xi cited in Rollock and Gillborn, 2011). From a (neo-) Marxist perspective, as I argue in Cole (2017b, p. 80), it is important to listen to the stories and lived experiences of ‘racialized’ peoples, but, from a Marxist perspective these lived experiences need to be related to economic and political structures so that we can all better understand how and why they are racialized and for what reasons, in different geographical locations, and different historical periods and conjunctures, in order to facilitate moving forward in our mutual understanding of racism, so as to devise strategies to combat it.

Fourth, there is the concept of interest convergence (Rollock and Gillborn, 2011). There are times when greater ‘race’ equality operates in the perceived interests of white people, and this notion of ‘interest convergence’ helps to explain how advances can be achieved: the interest of people of colour in achieving ‘racial’ equality will be accommodated only when it converges with the interests of white people. From a Marxist perspective, this ‘interest convergence’ relates more to the interests of the white racialized capitalist state. In Cole, 2017b, pp. 84-85, I give a number of examples, including an example given by Gloria Ladson-Billings (2005, p. 58) when, in the state of Arizona, the governor argued that the state could not afford to observe the holiday for Martin Luther King Jr. Day. However, after threatened boycotts from tourists, African

American groups and the National Basketball Association the decision was reversed. Ladson-Billings, herself a leading US Critical Race Theorist, acknowledges that the potential loss of revenue meant that the state's interests converged with those of African Americans. To this I added, the decision reversal 'relates directly to the pursuit of surplus value by Arizonian capitalists ... supported by the racialized capitalist local state' (Cole, 2017b, p. 85).

Rollock and Gillborn (2011)'s final principle is that Critical Race Theorists often adopt intersectionality. While 'race' remains central, CRT recognises other forms of oppression, such as those base on gender, sexuality and disability. Intersectionality is discussed at length later in this article (pp. 67 - 72), including a neo-Marxist critique⁶.

The *REE* Special Edition on 'BritCrit', January, 2012⁷.

Topics covered in the seven articles in *REE* 15 (1) (2012) are wide-ranging and include *A Political Attempt to Reinstatethe 'Race Traitor' Movement*; *Understanding the Place of Black British Intellectuals in UK Society*; *CRT Methodologies*; *The Experiences of Racialized Existence*; *Intersections Between Class, 'Race' and Gender*; *Multicultural and Antiracist Education, CRT and Islamophobia*; and *The Educational Experiences of the Black Middle Class With Respect to Their Children's Schooling*.

A Political Attempt to Reinstatethe 'Race Traitor' Movement

I devoted a whole chapter of Cole, 2017a (pp. 41-70; see also Cole, 2012) to Preston and Chadderton, 2012). In that article, John Preston and Charlotte Chadderton (2012, p. 85) suggest that the 'Race Traitor' ('RT') movement, prominent in the 1990s and dedicated to 'abolishing the white race', remains 'a political form with resonance for contemporary Marxists.' Whereas Preston and Chadderton (2012, p. 1) argue that CRT and public pedagogy can 'produce new

political praxis for Race Traitors in the twenty-first century’, I made the case that, while RT has some strengths, it has three major problems: its vulnerability to being misunderstood (confusing actual abolition or annihilation of white people with the political destruction of ‘whiteness’ and ‘white privilege’) ⁸; its almost exclusive focus on the ‘black/white’ binary and thus its accompanying tactics (which can have the effect of marginalising people on the receiving end of racism who are not African American or African Caribbean, or, indeed are not people of colour), and a lack of clarity in a vision for a just society (this it shares with CRT in general) (Cole, 2017a, pp. 42-43). I went on to demonstrate that, in fact, RT’s founders, Noel Ignatiev and John Garvey have both stridently reasserted their pre-RT Marxist politics, both in their writing and in their political activism. As a result, ‘Race Traitor’ has disappeared from the radar.

Understanding the Place of Black British Intellectuals in UK Society

The paper in *REE* 15 (1) by Paul Warmington is exploratory, assessing the role of CRT in understanding the place of black British intellectuals in UK society, and in contrast to the US, their often marginalized status in public life (Warmington 2012). He states that the ‘article might be read as a variant of what CRT refers to as “counter-storytelling”’ (p. 6). Richard Delgado and Jean Stefancic (2001, p. 144) define counter-storytelling as ‘writing that aims to cast doubt on the validity of accepted premises or myths, especially ones held by the majority.’ The counter-story told is one that resonates with the voices of black British thinkers that have so often been silenced (Warmington 2012, p. 6). Warmington discusses the intellectual contribution of a wide range of black intellectuals since the 1960s (at that time, ‘black’ was used as an all-encompassing term to include all people who experienced racism and who identified politically with the nomenclature: c.f. the US classification, ‘people of colour’). While Warmington is informative, particularly to an audience not familiar with the subject matter, beyond ‘counter-storytelling’ it is difficult to

see what is particularly CRTist in his account. Indeed, in his discussion, he draws on a range of theory used by the ‘black intellectuals’ including Marxism. As noted earlier, from a neo-Marxist perspective, it is important to listen to the stories, but to relate them to economic and political structures, historically and geographically.

Warmington’s counter-story of ‘black’ British intellectuals, of which he is one, needs to be contextualized in terms of the overall dimensions of racism in UK society historically and contemporaneously. The backdrop of Warmington’s paper is, of course, a form of colour-coded racism which has its origins in Britain’s vast colonial empire, and which manifested itself in the UK in the post-Second World War period when Britain was hungry for labour power, and recruited workers from its colonies and ex-colonies.

Warmington deploys the CRT concept of ‘white supremacy’ in its CRT usage in his discussion of colour-coded racism. There are a number of problematics with the concept of ‘white supremacy’ as used by Critical Race Theorists (see Cole 2017b pp. 37-48 for an extended discussion of these problematics), both with respect to the current manifestations of the colonial legacy and because of the widespread existence in the UK of the multiple forms of racism that are not colour-coded or are hybridist. The colonial legacy continues in a number of forms. For example, late in 2017, it was revealed that Britain’s most powerful elite are 97% white (Duncan, 2017). At the same time, a survey revealed that some 53% think selling or displaying ‘golliwogs’ is acceptable, compared to 27% who don’t and 20% who don’t know (Bale, 2017). Interestingly, the majority who don’t consider doing so as racist is even bigger: 63% don’t, compared to 20% who do and 17% who don’t know (Bale, 2017)⁹.

While racism directed at Asian and black people is arguably the most publicly recognized form of racism, and while non-colour-coded racism and forms of hybridist racism in the UK are not Warmington’s focus, it is important also to consider them. Please see the Appendix to this paper for a brief history and some current examples of non-colour-coded and hybridist racism.

In a response to arguments by Alpesh Maisuria and myself (Cole and Maisuria 2007) that ‘white supremacy’ is not appropriate to analyse the experiences of refugees, some of whom are phenotypically white, Chadderton and Edmonds (2015, p. 142) state that white privilege does not refer to skin colour, but rather to ‘a system of structural discrimination’ which positions ‘northern and western Europeans as superior to eastern and southern Europeans and the Irish, as well Jews’. This, they conclude, is particularly important to consider when examining refugees with respect to skin colour. While, this is, of course, true, it is also true as I have argued that racism is non-colour-coded. This is not only the case with certain Europeans, the Irish and Jewish peoples, but also the case with Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities. In the UK, for example, many Gypsies have white skin, and racism directed at them is endemic.

To be blunt, is there really any purchase in trying to incorporate non-colour-coded racism or hybridist racism (anti-refugee and anti-asylum-seeker racism and Islamophobia) under the banner of ‘white supremacy’ or ‘white privilege’?

All of these types of racism need to be viewed alongside ongoing and continuing antisemitism, still a significant form of non-colour-coded racism in the second decade of the twenty-first century, with racialization dating back centuries. There can, of course, be permutations among these various forms of racism.

Returning to the historical source of Warmington's article: in much the same way as Asian and African Caribbean workers did in the immediate post-Second World War period, Eastern European workers today provide the labour power needed by capitalists (see Cole 2016, pp. 52-56 and pp. 67-83).

It could be argued that in the run-up to the 2015 general election, xeno-racism directed primarily at Bulgarian and Romanian migrant workers vied with Islamophobia as the most prominent form of racism in the UK, with also a measure of anti-asylum-seeker racism (see Cole 2016, pp. 60-83). It is difficult to see how 'white supremacy' can usefully inform theorization of either non-colour-coded or hybridist racism.

From a (neo-) Marxist perspective, there continue to be contradictions between capital's desire for (cheap) labour and politicians vying for popular racist support. To take one example, in 2015, the then Home Secretary Theresa May's populist anti-immigration speech at the Conservative Party Conference (May was hoping to replace David Cameron as leader of the party) was described by the director general of the Institute of Directors as 'irresponsible rhetoric'.

CRT Methodologies

Kevin Hylton addresses what constitutes CRT methodologies. They are, he argues, 'focused on philosophical and ethical imperatives that explore, confront and change negative racialised relations' (Hylton 2012, p. 37).

Hylton provides a thorough summary of developments in CRT methodology so far, and urges researchers to be involved in social change and social transformation in addition to antiracism. He gives a list of key considerations for CRT methodologies on p. 36 of his paper. Of these, issues such as 'social justice'; 'a challenge to oppression and subordination' (Marxists would preface

‘A bright future’ for ‘something new and highly significant’ or a bit of a damp squib?

this with ‘exploitation’); ‘praxis orientation’; ‘activist scholarship’; ‘a participatory approach’; and ‘challenging the passive reproduction of established questions and practices’ would, from a neo-Marxist perspective all need to be linked to the economic and political realities of austerity/immiseration capitalism (Hill (ed.) 2013)¹⁰, coupled with the need to transcend it, and move towards twenty-first-century socialism (see Cole, 2018b).

The Experiences of Racialized Existence

In her contribution, Namita Chakrabarty combines psychoanalytical theory with CRT to try to understand the former’s construction of *buried alive* in its different manifestations. As she explains, her focus is ‘the psychological experience of being *buried alive* as raced experience’¹¹ (Chakrabarty 2012, p. 45). She provided two counter-narratives, one where a BME (Black and Minority Ethnic)¹² academic is incorrectly reported absent from work by a white administrative assistant, and her manager refuses to believe that she was actually present: the ‘white male word of absence of race was stronger than the live presence of BME race’ (Chakrabarty 2012, p. 47); the other is a true story, where a woman with an Afrikaans accent refuses to share a taxi with her in London in the aftermath of 7/7, declaring: ‘[w]ho’d want to share a cab with an Asian on a day like this?’ (Chakrabarty 2012, p. 48).

Both stories, fictional and true, demonstrate the feeling of being *buried alive*. Again, beyond the use of counter-narratives applied in the UK context, there is no *theoretical* development of ‘BritCrit’.

From a (neo-)Marxist perspective, the first counter-narrative, as with Warmington’s counter-story, relates to the continuing legacy of a form of racism that had its origins in British colonialism, and the same provisos apply

with respect to the plethora of other forms of racism in UK society, while the second, given the Afrikaans accent, throws up the complex relationship between capitalism, racism and apartheid in South Africa, best explained by neo-Marxist analysis (see, for example, Wolpe 1988; Fine 1990) and the continuing legacy there today of white corporate capitalism.

Ganikai Chengu (2015) explains how white supremacy (in its traditional, not CRT sense) persists in South Africa today, with a staggering 80 % of the country's \$2.5 trillion mineral wealth still in the hands of South African whites and Western foreigners. It is difficult to see how, when 'white supremacy' encompasses not just the atrocities of apartheid, but mundane everyday racism, CRT can adequately understand developments in South Africa. This perhaps explains why, as is apparent throughout this paper, Critical Race Theorists tend to draw on (neo-)Marxist analysis to make connections with economics and politics.⁷ 'White supremacy' as an umbrella term is inadequate for the task of explaining the various and multiple manifestations of racism.

Intersections Between Class, 'Race' and Gender

In her article on 'the liminal space of alterity', Nicola Rollock (2012, p. 65) reflects 'critically on...the intersections between social class, race and gender', thus adopting intersectionality as an analytical tool, another discernible trend among Critical Race Theorists, as we will see in this paper. Gillborn explains intersectionality's connection to CRT. As he points out, Critical Race Theorists 'often focus on how racism works with, against and through additional axes of differentiation including class, gender, sexuality and disability' (Gillborn 2008, p. 36). Hence, there are a number of identity-specific varieties, as discussed in Cole (2017b, chapter 2), such as 'LatCrit', 'Asian-American jurisprudence', 'Native jurisprudence', and 'queer-crit', as well as Critical Race Theorists concerned with 'disability'. As Gillborn argues, this concern with

‘A bright future’ for ‘something new and highly significant’ or a bit of a damp squib?

intersectionality is especially strong in Critical Race Feminism (Gillborn 2008, p. 36), itself a variety of CRT. Indeed, the very concept of intersectionality is generally attributed to the feminist Critical Race Theorist Kimberlé Crenshaw in an article in 1989, in which she sought to challenge both feminist and antiracist theory and practice that neglected to ‘accurately reflect the interaction of race and gender’ (Crenshaw 1989, p. 140). As she argued, ‘because the intersectional experience is greater than the sum of racism and sexism, any analysis that does not take intersectionality into account cannot sufficiently address the particular manner in which Black women are subordinated’ (Crenshaw 1989, p. 140). A key aspect of intersectionality is its premise that multiple oppressions are not each suffered separately, but as a single, synthesized experience (Smith 2013/14, p. 3).

Leading UK-based intersectionality theorist Nira Yuval-Davis states that unlike ‘many feminists, especially black feminists, who focus on intersectional analysis as specific to black and ethnic minorities women or, at least, to marginalized people’, she sees ‘intersectionality as the most valid approach to analyze social stratification as a whole’. Intersectional analysis, she claims, ‘does not prioritize one facet or category of social difference’. ‘As to the question of how many facets of social difference and axes of power need to be analyzed’, she clarifies her view of its fluidity:

this is different in different historical locations and moments, and the decision on which ones to focus involve both empirical reality as well as political and especially ontological struggles. What is clear, however, is that when we carry out intersectional analysis, we cannot homogenize the ways any political project or claimings affect people who are differentially located within the same boundaries of belonging. (Yuval-Davis 2011, p. 4)

Intersectionality can be merely an *academic* discipline, divorced from class struggle, or it can be a healthy counterbalance to what remains of reductionist Marxism, which views any consideration of oppression and exploitation beyond social class to be diversionary. At its worst, intersectionality simply creates ‘a list of naturalized identities, abstracted from their material and historical context’ (Mitchell 2013, p. 7), of which the ‘practical upshot...is the perpetual articulation of *difference*, resulting in fragmentation and the stagnation of political activity’ (Rectenwald 2013, p. 2). Intersectionality viewed thus renders social class as non-axiomatic, not the crucial social relation on which depends the ability or otherwise of capitalism to sustain and reproduce itself.

As Epifanio San Juan Jr. argues, unlike the Marxist concept of class as signifying class conflict, class as an element of identity makes it ‘incomplete without taking into account other factors like race, gender, locality, and so on’ (San Juan 2003, p. 14). In other words the class struggle which, for Marxists, is inherent in the capitalist mode of production gets lost, and social class is considered *only* as subjective identity.

With respect to Rollock’s paper, while it is, of course, the case that classism has important effects on people’s lives, and is worthy of analysis in its own right, for Marxists there is a fundamental need for an analysis that connects it to the capitalist economy. At its best intersectionality is ‘rooted in real material conditions structured by social class’ (Collins 1995, p. 345). As Sharon Smith argues, as ‘an *additive* to Marxist theory, intersectionality leads the way toward a much higher level of understanding of the character of oppression than that developed by classical Marxists’.

Underlying the Marxist position that no academic political theory is valid if it is divorced from workers’ struggles, Smith adds that intersectionality thus defined

‘A bright future’ for ‘something new and highly significant’ or a bit of a damp squib?

enables ‘the further development of the ways in which *solidarity* can be built between all those who suffer oppression and exploitation under capitalism to forge a unified movement’ (Smith 2013/14, p. 13) (emphasis added).

Rollock also makes use of the CRT tool of counter-narrative and tells a true story and a fictional one. In the former, she recalls how when she was a child, she shrieked and laughed after being tickled by a school friend, and the teacher responded: ‘[w]ell, I don’t know where *you* come from but *we* certainly don’t do that sort of thing here!’ (Rollock 2012, p. 69).

The purpose of the story is to show how Rollock ‘came to class awareness and the beginnings of [her] understanding of the power and taken-for-granted privileges embedded in Whiteness’ (Rollock 2012, p. 70). Rollock uses her fictional story to introduce ‘rules of racial engagement for (possible) survival in WhiteWorld’ (Rollock 2012, pp. 78–80). These ten rules reveal, in Rollock’s (p. 78) words, ‘the multilayered and nuanced analysis required for survival for those in the margins’.

Rollock’s invocation of ‘WhiteWorld’ rather than racialized capitalism further serves to lose the exploitative as well as oppressive nature of this world system, exacerbated by its current austerity/immiseration mode (see chapter 6 of Cole, 2017a for a discussion).

Multicultural and Antiracist Education, CRT and Islamophobia

Shirin Housee’s paper (Housee 2012) has three sections: first, there is a discussion of the historical debates between multicultural and antiracist education in the UK, which leads on to an exploration, in the second section, of the theoretical developments in CRT in order to get to the ‘deep root’ of racism

that exists, as argued by the antiracists; third, Housee looks at Islamophobia in the context of her (university) students' perceptions.

Having reflected on two seminar sessions on Islamophobia and the comments from the students, she argues that her goal as an educator is to 'teach in a way that engages students and leads them to reflect on the socio-economic political/religious issues' that surround our lives (Housee 2012, p. 118).

CRT is not really drawn on in the substantive parts of Housee's text, except in the general sense that CRT and Critical Race Theorists promote antiracism and social justice, as do all progressive educators, including those who do not associate with CRT or use it, or even reject it in favour of other critical theory. While Housee (2012, p. 111) states that the 'student voice, indeed, counter voice, is central to [her] work of anti-racism in Higher Education', her analysis of work with her students, given that presumably some (many?) are white, her theoretical stance would seem to fall more in the realms of 'student voice' than the CRT concept of 'counter-narrative'. So once again there is no real development of 'BritCrit'.

From a (neo-)Marxist perspective, the debate between multiculturalism and antiracism would indeed, as Housee points out, need to be informed by 'structural and societal inequalities and institutional racism', for antiracists the key to understanding minority ethnic inequalities.

Reflecting 'on the socio-economic political/religious issues' that surround our lives is imperative for Marxist educators, and, in the context of Islamophobia (which I have described as hybridist, in that it is not necessarily colour-coded), would entail a thorough examination of twentieth- and twenty-first-century imperialisms (unmentioned by Housee) and, concomitant on the latter, the 'war

‘A bright future’ for ‘something new and highly significant’ or a bit of a damp squib?

on terror’ (which is mentioned by Housee) and their roles in exacerbating anti-Asian racism and Islamophobia.

The Educational Experiences of the Black Middle Class with Respect to Their Children’s Schooling

In the final article in the special edition, David Gillborn, Nicola Rollock, Carol Vincent and Stephen Ball discuss the findings of an Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC)-funded project that used in-depth interviews to explore the educational experiences of the black middle class with respect to their children’s schooling. They argue that although the parents have material and cultural capital, high expectations and support for education, this is thwarted by racist stereotyping and exclusion.

On p. 125, Gillborn et al. (2012) state:

Drawing on the insights of Critical Race Theory...we reject the automatic focus on White people as the normative centre for analysis and, instead, foreground the experiences and voices of people of colour. In particular, we build on the CRT tenet that scholarship should accord a central place to the experiential knowledge of people of colour as a means of better understanding and combating race inequity in education.

However, beyond this statement of the principle that informed the research there is no use of CRT concepts in this paper, and therefore no analytical development of ‘BritCrit’, but rather the deployment of intersectional analysis. With respect to (neo-) Marxism, the same stipulation applies as in the case of Rollock’s singly authored piece, namely, that while classism is important, ‘intersectionality’ tends to render class *exploitation* invisible when class is subsumed within a ‘race’, gender, class matrix, with each viewed as *identities* only.

It could be argued that the papers in the special issue of *REE* were published too early for there to be substantial development of a British CRT. However, this is to ignore the fact that CRT has had a presence in the UK, at least since 2005, when Gillborn's first CRT article was published (Gillborn 2005)¹³.

'BritCrit' January 2012 – January 2018

In this section of the paper, I discuss the six UK-based articles published in *REE* between the special edition in January 2012 and January 2018. The subject matter of the papers is as follows: *Student Teacher Perceptions of Black and White Teacher Educators*; *Schools' Racist Perceptions of Parents of Color*; *Student Teachers' Understandings of Discourse of 'Race', Diversity and Inclusion*; *The Militarisation of English Schools*; *Using Counter-Stories to Challenge Stock Stories About Traveller Families*; and *Counter-Narrative with Respect to Public Policy Rhetoric Around Muslim Schools*,

Student Teacher Perceptions of Black and White Teacher Educators

The first article is by Heather Jane Smith and Vini Lander, both teacher educators, one of whom is black and the other white. In line with CRT's call for counter-storytelling, the black teacher educator maintained detailed diaries of her teaching experiences over the years (Smith and Lander 2012, p. 332), while the white teacher educator 'taught diversity and equality on a postgraduate initial teacher education course with a specific focus on critical whiteness studies' (p. 332)¹⁴.

From their research, they argue that the black teacher educator 'is expected to be knowledgeable about equality in general due to her "authentic" relationship with the issues' (p. 337). As they go on, crucially this does not automatically imply an 'intellectual' knowledge of the issues, since the focus is on experiential knowledge (p. 337). A related consequence, they explain, 'of the

perceived primacy of experiential knowledge is an assumption that Black teacher educators should be interested in teaching about educational equality and that this should be their main teaching/research interest’ (p. 337).

Perversely, they go on, ‘this could also lead to a perception that only Black teachers should be interested in this subject area, leading to a concomitant marginalisation of the subject area itself’ (p. 337).

In sharp contrast to all of this, they point out, the ‘race’ of the white teacher educator generally goes unmarked, and students have no reason ‘to assume either the existence of experiential knowledge or a lack of intellectual knowledge’ (p. 337). Moreover, even if they do notice the white teacher educator’s ‘race’ (e.g. in questioning her interest in this subject area), an assumption of her likely lack of experiential knowledge may lead them ‘to presuppose an intellectual knowledge’ (p. 338). Thus, they go on, the black teacher educator ‘is perceived as legitimate in her role as a teacher of this subject area in terms of her experiential understanding’, while the white teacher educator ‘is perceived as a legitimate teacher educator because of her academic grounding in the subject area’ (p. 338).

In addition, unlike the white teacher educator’s experience of overt objections to her assumed political bias in teaching against racism, which is viewed as unfortunate but forgivable and which does not relate to her skin colour, the disreputable motive of racial bias is now assigned to the black teacher educator (p. 343). As one of the black teacher educator’s students put it, in a somewhat perverse use of the phrase, ‘she was playing the race card’,¹⁵ while one of the white teacher educator’s students remarked, ‘I don’t mind having an argument with you because I feel you’re like you’re going to be unbiased in your opinions. If I detect that you might be more, obviously you’re passionate about your subject, but

I think there's a difference between being passionate and being personal' (pp. 343–344). In other words, the white teacher educator is viewed as an ardent intellectual, while the black teacher educator is viewed as having an 'agenda'— 'an indoctrinator rather than a teacher' (p. 344). As one of the students explained of the latter: 'Gradually during the lecture I felt as if she was on a personal mission to change the way she was treated in the past' (p. 344).

This is a well-resourced, well-argued paper which underlines the institutional racism in the UK education system, first *officially* acknowledged by Macpherson in the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry Report in 1999. However, as the authors themselves note, there is nothing surprising in their findings, and once again, this article does not develop 'BritCrit'.

Schools' Racist Perceptions of Parents of Colour

Thandeka Chapman and Kalwant Bhopal (2013) examine how common sense understandings of 'parenting' paint parents of colour as inattentive and non-participatory actors in public (state) school settings in the USA (Chapman) and the UK (Bhopal). Their conclusion is that because of the white middle class framework of 'good parenting', the ongoing efforts of women of colour (men are not expected to participate in the same way as women) as fully engaged parents go unrecognized and underestimated which facilitates the blaming of failing schools within the family structures of people of colour, thus exonerating 'the systemic processes that maintain inequitable schooling' (Chapman and Bhopal 2013, p. 581).

It is informative here to dwell on 'common sense' from a neo-Marxist perspective. Italian neo-Marxist Antonio Gramsci made a distinction between 'common sense' and good sense. 'Common sense' refers to thoughts and

‘A bright future’ for ‘something new and highly significant’ or a bit of a damp squib?

reflections that are felt to be the product of years of knowing what is right and necessary, but really mirror the interests of the ruling class. ‘Common sense’, then, is ‘based on surface appearances and information, and does not reach deeper to give a systemic explanation for the disparities that exist in society’ (Taylor 2011, p. 7). ‘Common sense’ is generally used to denote a down-to-earth ‘good sense’ and is thought to represent the distilled truths of centuries of practical experience, so that to say that an idea or practice is ‘only common sense’ is to claim precedence over the arguments of Left intellectuals and, in effect, to foreclose discussion (Lawrence, 1982, p. 48). As Diana Coben (2002, p. 285) has noted, Gramsci’s distinction between good sense and common sense ‘has been revealed as multifaceted and complex’. For common sense:

is not a single unique conception, identical in time and space. It is the ‘folklore’ of philosophy, and, like folklore, it takes countless different forms. Its most fundamental characteristic is that it is . . . fragmentary, incoherent and inconsequential. (Gramsci, 1978, p. 419).

Good sense, on the other hand, for Gramsci is informed by a real political and economic awareness of capitalism, exemplified by Marxism and obtained by reading Marx. As Coben (1999, p. 206) has argued, good sense, for Gramsci, ‘may be created out of common sense through an educative Marxist politics’. Gramsci believed that ““everyone” is a philosopher, and that it is not a question of introducing from scratch a scientific form of thought into everyone's individual life, but of renovating and making “critical” an already existing activity’ (Gramsci 1978, p. 330-331). Gramsci also believed that ‘[a]ll men are intellectuals, . . . but not all men have in society the function of intellectuals’ (ibid., p. 9). Extending these insights to the whole of humankind (not just men!) is an essential component of Marxism.

‘Common sense’ connects racialization with popular consciousness. ‘Common sense’ also works to reinforce racist stereotypes. Most pertinent to Chapman and Bhopal’s article, political activist and Marxist academic Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor gives the example of African Americans (although this can usually be applied to racialized groups in general) who, because of their poorer housing, schooling, shorter life span and generally worse conditions, are perceived to be inferior—‘they caused all this themselves’— which reinforces racism and racialization (Taylor 2011, p. 7).

As educationalist Diana Coben (1999) has argued, good sense ‘may be created out of common sense through an educative Marxist politics’. Good sense then would reveal that racialized groups are living in worse conditions because of racism, racialization and their structural location in capitalist society.

Chapman and Bhopal’s analysis draws to a large extent on intersectionality and to a lesser extent on ‘white privilege’, the latter predating CRT (founded in 1989) and most associated with the work of Peggy McIntosh (1988)¹⁶ Thus this paper may be viewed as a development in the theorization of transatlantic intersectionality and white privilege rather than ‘BritCrit’.

Student Teachers’ Understandings of Discourse of ‘Race’, Diversity and Inclusion

Kalwant Bhopal and Jasmine Rhamie (2014, p. 311) examine how students in Initial Teacher Training courses understand and conceptualize discourses of ‘race’, diversity and inclusion, focusing on racialized identities. They claim that ‘Critical Race Theory (CRT) underpinned the theoretical approach to the data analysis’, since ‘CRT acknowledges and foregrounds race suggesting that Whiteness is normalised in society and others are positioned in relation to this norm’ (Bhopal and Rhamie (2014, p. 311) (CRT is only mentioned this once).

‘A bright future’ for ‘something new and highly significant’ or a bit of a damp squib?

However, their approach could more accurately be described as grounded in and developing intersectionality (mentioned twice in their account) rather than CRT. This is reflected in the worthwhile recommendations they make at the end which are:

- Initial Teacher Education (ITE) providers should provide explicit teaching on how to manage racism in schools with specific strategies and information on policy guidance.
- Opportunities should be provided for students to engage in discussions of their identities and how these may impact on their teaching.
- Issues of identity should be embedded across the whole of ITE provision ensuring that tutors themselves critically engage with their own identities drawing on this to support interactions with students.
- Further research in this area is needed, particularly the impact of the Equalities Act 2010 and how it affects the training of student teachers (Bhopal and Rhamie 2014, p. 322).

From a Marxist perspective, student teachers could usefully also explore how these identities position them in a racialized (and gendered) class-based neoliberal capitalist society, particularly in its austerity/ immiseration mode (see chapter 6 of Cole, 2017a for a discussion).

The Militarization of English Schools

I now analyse an article that definitively informs the ongoing theoretical debate between CRT and Marxism, but, in my view, develops the latter at the expense of the former. The paper by Charlotte Chadderton, herself co-author of the article Preston and Chadderton (2012) discussed earlier in this paper, is entitled ‘The militarisation of English schools: Troops to Teaching and the implications for Initial Teacher Education and race equality’ (Chadderton 2014). It utilizes both CRT (specifically the way it uses the idea of ‘white supremacy’) and neo-

Marxism (in the form of Louis Althusser's concept of Ideological and Repressive State Apparatuses—ISAs and RSAs) (Althusser 1971).

She points out that the *Troops to Teachers (TtT)* initiative in the English education system combines the army RSA with the education ISA (Chadderton 2014, p. 409)¹⁷, and, following Judith Butler (2004) and Enora Brown (2011), suggests that we are currently undergoing a shift towards the RSAs as the dominant form of social control, exemplified by a growing culture of militarization (Chadderton 2014, pp. 408–409). From an Althusserian perspective, she concludes, the linking of the RSA with the ISA encourages the lowliest workers to 'accept their position' in capitalist society (Chadderton 2014, p. 413). As she puts it, describing the realities of austerity/immiseration capitalism:

As the government withdraws its support for the welfare of the population and turns increasingly to profit and away from democratic practice, it makes sense that it will need ever more repressive apparatuses to ensure the compliance of the population and prevent revolt. The most likely to revolt are the disadvantaged or 'disposable' youth, as seen in the UK's 2011 riots...

It should come as no surprise that those in power combine traditional RSAs and ISAs: schools and the army, to help achieve this. (Chadderton 2014, p. 418)

While her assertion that the UK government 'turns *increasingly* to profit' (my emphasis) is open to misinterpretation in that capitalist governments always prioritize profit-making (albeit greatly intensified under neoliberal capitalism), Chadderton's argument is quintessentially neo-Marxist.

Chadderton also develops neo-Marxist analysis by linking neoliberal capitalism to racism and generating the concept of a 'military–industrial– education

‘A bright future’ for ‘something new and highly significant’ or a bit of a damp squib?

complex’ in the guise of *TtT*, which Chadderton (2014, p. 407) convincingly argues seeks to contain and police young people who are marginalized along the lines of ‘race’ and class, and which contributes to a wider move to increase ideological support for foreign wars in the context of neoliberal objectives and increasing social inequalities. Chadderton quite rightly notes how *TtT* targets economically deprived working class children, theorized with an interesting application of (neo-) Marxist concepts. However, it is difficult to see how the incorporation of the CRT concept of ‘white supremacy’ aids the analysis of racialized working class children. Indeed, I would argue that it actually detracts from it. While, as I have argued, ‘white supremacy’ is not useful to describe ‘colour-coded racism’, it is even less well-equipped to understand non-colour-coded racism. Racialized children on the receiving end of *TtT* will not only be Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) children, but also be the daughters and sons of white Eastern European migrant workers, white Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children and the children of refugees and asylum seekers, who are on the receiving end of what I have referred to as hybridist racism (racism which can be colour-coded or non-colour-coded).

Kate D’Arcy (2016) attempts to highlight in order to refute ‘stock stories’ (derived from Delgado, 1988) about Traveller communities. For founding Critical Race Theorist, Richard Delgado (1988 [2000], p. 60) ‘stock stories’ are made up by those in control:

The dominant group creates its own stories ... [that] remind it of its identity in relation to outgroups, and provide it with a form of shared reality in which its own superior position is seen as natural

For Delgado (1988 [2000], p. 64), ‘the stock story [is] the one the institution collectively forms and tells about itself.’ In the stock story that Delgado

presents, racism is portrayed as playing no part in a black lawyer's rejection for a teaching position at a major law school in the US. D'Arcy's concern, however, is racism directed at the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities in the UK. Her specific focus is Traveller families and (home) education. As she explains, Elective Home Education (EHE) is a legal alternative to schooling in England for all children. Her stock story is that Gypsy, Roma and Traveller families choose home education so they can continue travelling, whereas in fact many Traveller communities are no longer nomadic (D'Arcy, 2016, pp. 640-641). Associated aspects of the stock story are that EHE is being used as a device to avoid school attendance without legal penalty; that Traveller families are ill-equipped to deliver a suitable education for their children; and that Traveller girls are not provided with formal education after the age of eleven (D'Arcy, 2016, pp. 641-642).

D'Arcy's counter-story contains the presentation of evidence in the literature dating back to 2004 that although mobility issues were still relevant for some children, the majority of Travellers in the UK are no longer nomadic because of social, economic and legal constraints (D'Arcy, 2016, p. 643). In addition, in her interviews with 11 families, not a single family referred to mobility as the reason for taking up EHE (p. 642). Finally, and most crucially, families' counter-stories revealed that 'they were committed to education but withdrew their children due to ongoing racism and discrimination in school' from students and teachers and also within the local community (D'Arcy, pp. 642-645).

D'Arcy (2016, p. 640) notes that 'a gap remains in the CRT literature regarding Traveller communities.' She is right to suggest that this is possibly because 'to the observer they are white and racism towards whiteness is not widely acknowledged' (D'Arcy, 2016, p. 640). D'Arcy (2016, pp. 644-645) concludes, without substantiation, that 'CRT is useful and appropriate to analyse and

challenge [racism towards whiteness] and offers a framework to do so.’ While I would agree that ‘counter-story’ provides a good corrective to the ‘stock story’, and while I would acknowledge that both ‘counter-story’ and ‘stock story’ are key CRT concepts, CRT, I would argue, faces a fundamental obstacle in analysing constituencies such as Gypsy Roma and Traveller communities and other constituencies that face non-colour-coded racism. This is because of the CRT insistence on retaining the concept of ‘white supremacy’ as everyday racism. Thus, like other Critical Race Theorists. D’Arcy tries to retain this central CRT concern with ‘whiteness’. She begins by stating that certain minority communities are judged as ‘opposite’, ‘non-white’ and ‘Other’ (D’Arcy, 2016, p. 636). It is certainly the case that the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities are clearly portrayed in racist discourse as ‘other’ as well as ‘opposite’ to the perceived ‘ways of life’ of non-Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities.

This ‘othering’ and perceiving as ‘opposite’ to ‘our way of life’ is illustrated in the ‘common-sense’ (à la Gramsci) racist perception of Travellers articulated by Southend Conservative Councillor Chris Walker. Note that Walker compounds anti-Gypsy, Roma and Traveller racism with anti-Irish racism, another long-standing form of non-colour-coded racism:

They are treated like pariahs because they are pariahs. They have been driven from Ireland whence they emanate because of their thieving and filthy ways. They contribute nothing to society in the way of taxes etc and create filth wherever they go. Why should we make allowance for them? It would be better for all if they were to learn the foolishness of their ways and go back to Ireland. They are their own worst enemies (cited in Cambridge, 2017).

Walker claims they have arrived in Southend twice in two years ‘and there’s been rubbish and damage each time’ (cited in Cambridge, 2017). While Walker

is clearly referring to people who he perceives to be Irish Travellers, in his reaction we can see common themes contained in the general stock story about the Gypsy Roma and Traveller communities in the UK: ‘pariah’; ‘thieving’; ‘filthy’; ‘contributing nothing’; ‘foolish ways’; ‘creating rubbish wherever they go’.

While such anti-Gypsy Roma and Traveller racism is commonplace in the UK, it is not generally acknowledged, either in academia or in popular consciousness, that, as D’Arcy (2016, p. 640) goes on to assert, ‘Travellers are not white.’ Nor does it aid in an analysis of the racism that is directed at these communities.

As a final comment on D’Arcy’s article, it is worth pointing out that interviewing those on the receiving end of racism and gathering other evidence such as selected academic literature and government documents to make the case against ‘stock stories’ or the official line is not merely the province of CRT. Marxists, for example, refer to counter-hegemonic discourse and literature challenging hegemonic forms.

The last of the six ‘BritCrit’ articles published in *REE* since its special edition in January 2012 addresses *Counter-Narrative with Respect to Public Policy Rhetoric Around Muslim Schools*. Damian Breen (2018). The article is overwhelmingly a very descriptive historical piece, and it is difficult to see how Critical Race Theory underpins it. While there are references to CRT and counter-narratives dotted all over the place, and while claims are made that what is presented is ‘an intersectional Critical Race Theory (CRT) /Islamophobia analysis’ (p. 31), there is little in-depth theoretical content. The main point being made seems to be that there is a disparity between rhetoric and reality. The rhetoric is that ‘state-funded Muslim schools represent important

‘A bright future’ for ‘something new and highly significant’ or a bit of a damp squib?

opportunities for the state to acknowledge and redress the wider political and educational inequity experienced by British Muslims through actively entering into partnership with Muslim communities’ (Breen, 2018, p. 42). However, this is undermined by ‘a culture of surveillance around Muslim children is education’ (p. 42), where ‘the political voices of Muslims are constrained’ and counter-terror strategies work with media narratives around the ‘war on terror’ to make sure that ‘being Muslim and speaking out against the state carries with it the risk of being labelled as a threat to national security’ (p. 42). In addition, there is a ‘misalignment between policy rhetoric and outcomes in terms of both numbers of Muslim schools and the nature of the partnerships they embody with the state’ (p. 42). In order to give the article of CRT veneer, the former claims are described as a master-narrative and the latter – the reality - as a counter-narrative.

Conclusion

In this paper, I looked at all the ‘BritCrit’ articles in the journal, *Race, Ethnicity and Education* from and including the special edition of *REE* on ‘Critical Race Theory in England’ (*REE*) 15 (1)) in January, 2012 up to January 2018 when this present article went to press, first to further an ongoing (neo-) Marxist critique of ‘BritCrit’; and second to address the extent to which CRT is a main focus in the light of other (competing) theoretical perspectives, and whether a quintessential British form of CRT is being developed. With respect to my first objective, I have attempted a (neo-) Marxist critique of the articles throughout this paper. With respect to the establishment and expansion of ‘BritCrit,’ I found that there was little, if any, substantive development, and that, apart from ‘counter-story’, ‘counter-narrative’ and their opposite, ‘stock story’, many of the articles employed theories other than CRT, including intersectionality (in its CRT deployment as highlighted by Gillborn, rather than as an *additive* to Marxist theory as discussed earlier this paper), ‘student voice’,

poststructuralism and ‘white privilege’ as additional explanatory theories. (Neo) Marxism was also used to complement CRT analyses. Many authors did not use CRT as the main frame of reference, except in the sense of stressing the importance of ‘race’ (but this was often in the context of intersectionality).

Most of the articles, I argued, could be enhanced by (neo-) Marxist analysis. Arguably then, it would appear that, with the important exception of Chadderton (2014) (which is more neo-Marxist than CRTist) and Preston and Chadderton (2012) (the focus of chapter 3 of Cole, 2017a; see also Cole, 2012), *if these articles are representative of the field in the UK*, which I believe they are (see endnote 2), CRT has yet to realize the potential envisaged for it in the UK¹⁸, and the debate between CRT and Marxism has not further developed.

I have suggested that this is probably because of a plethora of forms of non-colour-coded racism in the UK both historically and contemporaneously, and new hybridist racism (see Cole, 2018b, for an extended analysis; see also the Appendix to this article for a brief summary of Cole, 2018b). Of the thirteen ‘BritCrit’ papers analysed, of those that theorised minority ethnic groups, all but two were analyses of the BME communities or people of colour. The two exceptions were Shirin Housee (2012) who discusses Islamophobia, but does not theorise it, and Kate D’Arcy (2016, p. 640) who claims that ‘Travellers are not white.’

In CRT in general, there is a continuing insistence, following Derrick Bell, on the permanency of racism (albeit with a parallel insistence to continue challenging it). From a Marxist perspective, nothing is permanent, except socialist thinking and perhaps revolution. Marxists argue for the need for class consciousness, while Critical Race Theorists often refer to ‘race consciousness.’ In the light of the perceived threat from Jeremy Corbyn, as the Theresa May

‘A bright future’ for ‘something new and highly significant’ or a bit of a damp squib?

government begins to panic and there are claims from it that capitalism is the best system yet devised, for present-day Marxists a twenty-first century socialism that includes a consciousness of all forms of oppression, including racism, accompanied by a commitment to eradicate all oppression and exploitation is the only viable future. This is not to advocate some kind of utopia, where no one ever has racist (or sexist, or homophobic or transphobic or disablist or ageist) thoughts or never enacts such thoughts, but rather to call for a change of overall consciousness, whereby socialism and anti-oppression in general guide our thoughts and actions, where while some racist (and other oppressive) thoughts and actions remain, we all learn how to handle them and work to eliminate them. Critical Race Theory, whether in its ‘BritCrit’ mode or otherwise, is intrinsically lacking in a full economic and political analysis of inherently exploitative and oppressive nature of capitalism, nor is it theoretically equipped to envisage an alternative future beyond capitalism.

Appendix: A Brief History of Non-Colour-Coded and Hybridist Racism in the UK¹⁹

Non-colour-coded and hybridist racism is compatible with (neo-) Marxist analysis, since racism not necessarily related to skin colour moves attention away from the CRT prioritising of ‘race’ as primary back to class and capitalism, albeit decidedly *racialized* (and gendered) capitalism. The very name, *Critical Race* Theory has the effect of ignoring, or at best severely marginalising social class, especially with respect to its structural meaning: the location of workers and capitalists in racialized (and gendered) capitalist formations. The focus of Critical Race Theorists on ‘race’ serves both to draw a line between ‘white people’ and people of colour, and to justify its pre-occupation with ‘white supremacy’ and ‘whiteness’. From a Marxist perspective, racism should not be related to the social construct ‘race’ and not necessarily to skin colour. Rather the focus is on how racism is related

historically, contemporaneously and geopolitically to the capitalist mode of production.

Older Non-Colour-Coded Racism

While the biological ‘inferiority’ of Britain’s imperial subjects was perceived mainly second-hand in the British colonial era, the indigenous racism of the period was anti-Irish and antisemitic (e.g. Kirk, 1985; Miles, 1982).

Anti-Irish racism

There has been a continuity of anti-Irish racism, often taking the form of anti-Catholicism – racism therefore based on religion as well as nationality – stemming back to the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, which saw the first full colonization of the island with Protestant settlers from Britain. Dennis O’Hearn has argued that at three separate times in modern history, the Irish people, or settlers in Ireland, have tried to industrialize, and each time their attempts have been thwarted. The first was when the Irish economy was brutally incorporated into the English colonial empire in the 1640s by Cromwell’s army, when within a few years about 40 per cent of land was transferred to Cromwell’s soldiers and sponsors. The second occurred at the end of the eighteenth century, as the profits from the Empire meant that Britain developed more sophisticated technology which led to the collapse of the Irish cotton industry and mass emigration from Ireland. The third attempt took place in the first half of the twentieth century, but failed as the Irish began to be incorporated into the American Atlantic economy (O’Hearn, 2001). Emigration continued steadily throughout the twentieth century, often as a result of sectarian violence between Catholics and Protestants.

From the immediate post-war period onwards, both non-colour-coded and colour-coded racism were particularly visible as Irish migrant workers were

‘A bright future’ for ‘something new and highly significant’ or a bit of a damp squib?

racialized along with Asian and African Caribbean migrants, prompting the infamous signs in windows: ‘No Irish, No Blacks, No Dogs’. As immigrants’ children entered school, they too were on the receiving end of processes of racialization (Grosvenor 1987, 1989).

Immigration from Ireland to the UK rose again during the 2008 to 2011 Irish financial crisis. Anti-Irish racism has been rife in Scotland in the second decade of the twenty-first century (Cole, 2018b, pp?). Most recently, in a survey by Show Racism the Red Card Scotland (2017) 60% said they had witnessed anti-Irish racism, while 56% stated they had experienced anti-Irish racism in Scotland, with 65% finding the incidents stressful or extremely stressful. Racism took the form of physical threats and verbal abuse.

Antisemitism

Antisemitism also has a long history in the UK and continues to be a major form of non-colour-coded racism. From the 1880s, there was a sizeable immigration of destitute Jewish people from Eastern Europe, and this fuelled the preoccupation of politicians and commentators about the health of the nation, the fear of the degeneration of ‘the race’, and the subsequent threat to imperial and economic hegemony (Holmes, 1979; Thane, 1982). Jewish people were routinely referred to in the same contemptuous way as the people in Britain’s vast colonial empire (Cole, 2004), described by the media as ‘semi-barbarous’, unable or unwilling to ‘use the latrine’, depositing ‘their filth’ on ‘the floor of their rooms’ (Holmes, 1979, p. 17). At the other end of the social class spectrum, Jews were said to be involved in world conspiracy (conspiring together to take over the world) and were thus perceived to be directly threatening British imperial hegemony. Such attitudes were not confined to the ruling class and its spokespersons in the media. ‘Whenever, there is trouble in

Europe’, the Independent Labour Party (ILP) paper *Labour Leader* put it, ‘you may be sure a hooknosed Rothschild is at his games’ (Cohen, 1985).

Such sentiments fed directly into accusations at the time of the First World War that Jews had started the war to ruin Europe financially and politically, thus rendering Europe susceptible to Jewish ‘control’, and that Jews exploited the misery of the war to enrich themselves and prolonged it in order to lead the Bolshevik Revolution and further the aim of world revolution and domination (United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, 2012). Between the First and Second World Wars – the second of which of course unleashed the Holocaust – many Jews changed their names in order to offset racism (Clavane, 2012).

Antisemitism continues into the twenty-first century. In the first six months of 2017, the Community Security Trust (CST, 2017) recorded 767 antisemitic incidents, which was a 30% increase from the 589 incidents recorded during the same period in 2016. This is a record for the first six months of any year. The most common type of incident was verbal ‘randomly directed at visibly Jewish people in public’ (CST, 2017). However, there were also 80 violent antisemitic assaults, the highest number CST has ever recorded for the January to June period (CST, 2017). As CST’s chief executive, David Delew put it, ‘Antisemitism is having an increasing impact on the lives of British Jews and the hatred and anger that lies behind it is spreading’ (CST, 2017).

Anti-Gypsy Roma and Traveller Racism

Gypsy Roma and Traveller communities include English Romani Gypsies, Welsh Gypsies, Irish Travellers, Scottish Gypsy/Travellers, Travelling Show-people, Circus People, Boat Dwellers, Fairground Travellers, New Travellers and Romanis from Central and Eastern Europe who have arrived as refugees or asylum seekers (Clark, 2006b, p. 8, Clark, 2006c, p. 12) (with respect to this last

constituency, we have a possible conflation with xeno-racism and anti-asylum-seeker racism).

By the late nineteenth century, despite increased statutory controls, such as the 1822 General Turnpike Road Act that charged a 40-shilling (£2 in today’s money) fine for camping on the side of a turnpike road (Greenfields, 2006, pp. 60–61) (a law that was still in place until 1980 [Diverse Herts, 2009]), traditional stopping places were reasonably freely available (Greenfields, 2006, p. 62), and, as Duffy and Tomlinson (2009, p. 2) argue, always surviving on the margins of society, Gypsy people became a useful source of cheap labour seasonally in the fields, as blacksmiths and as entertainers. A pattern of travelling on specific circuits continued until the Second World War when, with the need for intensive labour, members of the Gypsy Roma and Traveller communities were recruited into semi-permanent work on the land, in the mining industries, in the army, and in factory and munitions work (Greenfields, 2006, p. 63). After the Second World War, with the mechanization of farming, the lifestyle of Gypsies changed drastically (Duffy and Tomlinson, 2009, p. 2). This mechanization of traditional rural work started in the 1950s, and previous sources of livelihood in the rural areas were no longer sufficient. With industrialization began the migration from rural areas. The changes in society were also reflected in the Romany Gypsy population. No longer wanted for hop or strawberry picking and other traditional trades, they found that they had to adapt. Work was difficult to find for some families and the motorization of families also changed the travel patterns. Many Gypsies moved from the rural areas to the cities and towns (ibid.), often meeting hostile reactions from the local population and from the authorities (Greenfields, 2006, p. 65). Where caravans were visible to non-Gypsy Roma and Traveller people, for example, next to a roadside, this attracted the attention of the authorities, and thus began a

cycle of rapid repeat evictions (ibid., p. 66). Many families reluctantly sought to be rehoused into local authority (Council) accommodation (ibid., p. 71).

However, the total number of traveller caravans in England in January 2016 was over 21,000, more than 1,000 up from the previous year. Overall, the January 2016 count indicated that 87 per cent of traveller caravans in England were on authorized land and that 13 per cent were on unauthorized land (Department for Communities and Local Government, 2016). Another type of non-colour-coded racism is that directed at Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities. With the mechanization of farming, many English Gypsies moved from rural areas to cities and towns, encountering hostile reactions from the local population and from the authorities (Greenfields 2006), with similar consequences of racialization as their children entered the education system. Given the presence in England of Irish Travellers, Anti-Gypsy Roma and Traveller racism is compounded with anti-Irish racism.

A Newer Form of Non-Colour-Coded Racism

Xeno-racism

In 1993 the Maastricht Treaty created the European Union. The integration of the UK into Europe and the disintegration of Eastern Europe has witnessed yet another newer form of racism directed at (predominantly) white Eastern European migrant workers and their families: xeno-racism (Sivanandan, cited in Fekete, 2001). There is a considerable weight of evidence of xeno-racism in the UK, dating from 2004 when ten more countries joined the EU, including a number from Eastern Europe, up to the present (e.g. Fitzgerald, 2007; Hardy, 2009; Burnett, 2012a; Cole, 2016, pp. 52-55, 67-83; Townsend, 2017).

To understand this variant of racism—xeno-racism—we need to link the racialization process with the political and economic realities of neoliberal capitalism in the UK, and the economics and politics of the European Union (see Cole, 2018b, pp ??). At the time of writing (September, 2017), a draft Home Office document, leaked to the *Guardian* newspaper. Nick Hopkin (2017) summarises ten key points of the document marked ‘Draft-Official Sensitive’:

- 1) Phased withdrawal of EU citizens
- 2) Britain first: the language in the document points to the development of a much more UK-focused immigration policy.
- 3) Passports and border controls; the paper sets out proposals to require EU nationals to show their passports when they come to the UK, rather than other forms of ID.
- 4) The end of free movement
- 5) Permits, fingerprinting – and cost: anyone applying for a resident permit for the UK will have to provide certain documents – and their fingerprints. They will need to be employed, studying or self-sufficient
- 6) Permits for most workers will only last for up to two years
- 7) Restricting the rights of EU family members to enter and remain in UK
- 8) Income requirements for some EU nationals
- 9) British workers prioritised
- 10) Refusing entry to ‘EU citizens with a criminal record or whom we consider a threat to the UK’.

While the leaked document refers to ‘EU citizens’ as a whole, the Tory document is clearly aimed at eastern European workers and their families and needs to be seen in the light of UKIP’s and the Conservative Party’s ongoing attempts to pander to the (xeno-) racist vote.

Anti-Gypsy, Roma and Traveller racism

Hybridist racism

Anti-asylum-seeker racism

There are also forms of racism that may be termed hybridist in that skin colour may or may not be a determining factor. Anti-asylum-seeker racism or Islamophobia are examples.

‘Dealing’ with asylum seekers also entails the brute force of the state – in the form of detention. Institutional racism exists also in the form of a separate prison complex for asylum seekers, where the ‘use of measures more germane to serious criminal investigation, such as the compulsory finger printing of all asylum seekers [...] has become routine’ (Fekete, 2009, p. 39). Some immigration removal centres (IRCs), formerly known as detention centres, are run by HM Prison Service but the majority are run by profit-making private companies. Mary Bosworth’s fieldwork in five IRCs reveals that they are ‘prison-like’, given that they isolate, confine and impose institutional rules upon inmates (Bosworth, 2014).¹⁹ Often these inmates have a long history in the United Kingdom. Detainees tell of their attachment to the United Kingdom, thus challenging the logic of IRCs as ‘sites of estrangement’.

The centres transform people into strangers who no longer belong in Britain and may be removed forcibly. They are frequently violent places, and people self-harm. Crucially, people are held for administrative purposes, and unlike prison sentences there is no fixed period for incarceration. Asylum seekers may be detained indefinitely under the Immigration Acts as long as they are being detained ‘with a view to removal’ (Fekete, 2009, p. 40). The aim of detention is ‘to break down the will of detainees, so as to make them compliant to their own removal’. Thus, Fekete concludes, those ‘who challenge their proposed deportation may be asked to choose between lengthy detention in the host

‘A bright future’ for ‘something new and highly significant’ or a bit of a damp squib?

country or return to torture in their country of origin’. She quite rightly describes this as ‘psychological torture’ (Fekete, 2009, p. 15).

Fekete explains that the motor which sets ‘the brutal deportation machine’ in motion is ‘targets’, initiated throughout Europe by governments. For example, in 2004, Tony Blair established a deportation formula based on the ‘monthly rate of removals’ exceeding ‘the number of unfounded applications’. As Fekete (2009) argues, the imposition of such targets ‘necessarily undermines the whole humanitarian principle of refugee policy – ‘need not numbers’ – and becomes its obverse, ‘numbers not need’, with failed asylum seekers being reduced to ‘a statistic for removal, even when they have strong claims to remain on humanitarian grounds’. Forced removal involves ‘officially sanctioned state violence’ on both routine passenger flights and chartered special flights and military jets. The latter are increasingly favoured, since passengers, pilots and crew on commercial flights object to the violence. On March 32, 2017, a 17-year-old unaccompanied Kurdish asylum seeker was brutally attacked in Croydon, London by a group of approximately thirty men and women and left unconscious, with a fractured skull and blood clot in brain. As Monish Bhatia (2017) points out, attacks on asylum seekers are not new. While extreme cases like this attract media attention, other hate incidents go largely unreported, unnoticed and unrecorded. Bhatia spent 18 months at three separate refugee organisations in England, conducting 3000 hours of observation and (repeat) interviews with twenty-two asylum seekers and those whose claims were turned down. In addition, he interviewed two social workers, a lawyer, a doctor, a psychiatrist and a homeless shelter manager, along with documentary evidence (Bhatia, 2017).

He argues that asylum seekers’ ‘access to the welfare state and labour market was severely restricted, if not completely denied’, with individuals ‘increasingly

pushed in a bureaucratic limbo, rendered destitute and kept in a de facto statelessness', where they suffered harm and violence.

The Primary Care Trust doctor and a senior social worker he interviewed, raised serious concerns about the ways in which hate related incidents were handled by the immigration system, giving in-depth examples of individuals who had suffered harm and repeat victimisation:

threatened with knives, physically assaulted, had burning objects forced through their letter boxes, dogs set on them as they walked outside their properties, and in one case, stones thrown at a heavily pregnant refuge seeking woman whenever she opened her door or window (Bhatia, 2017).

Bhatia concludes that the Tory government's 'hostile environment agenda makes it hard to create a safe and secure environment for migrants or to take action against hate':

Instead, it is likely to create an unsafe environment, and an environment of fear and insecurity amongst migrant groups. Hate is trickled down through media and political discourses. In this situation, achieving a robust reporting system, reduction in hate crimes and victim protection becomes even more challenging and perhaps a distant dream (Bhatia, 2017).

Islamophobia

Islamophobia became a major form of racism in Britain after the first Gulf War (1990–1991) (Poynting and Mason 2007), intensifying after 9/11 and 7/7.³ This form of racism may be termed hybridist in that Muslims may or may not be subject to colour-coded racism and are often marked out not so much by their colour as by their beards and headscarves (Sivanandan 2009).

‘A bright future’ for ‘something new and highly significant’ or a bit of a damp squib?

Like antisemitism, Islamophobia is often triggered by modes of dress or other cues (beards for example). Following the Manchester Arena bombing on May 22, 2017, when an Islamist terrorist attack resulted in the death of twenty-three people, including the attacker, and 250 injured, police in Manchester and London registered surges in Islamophobic hate crime. The Manchester bombing came two months after the vehicle ramming attack in Westminster when five people were killed. Islamophobic attacks went up over fivefold in Manchester in the week after the bombing, with 139 incidents reported to Tell Mama, the group recording Islamophobic crimes, compared to 25 incidents the previous week. (Travis, 2017). In one incident, Naveed Yasin, a trauma and orthopaedic surgeon, who helped to save the lives of those injured in Manchester was racially abused and labelled a ‘terrorist’ on his way to work at Salford Royal hospital. Other incidents around the country included one involving a woman from Southampton whose veil was ripped from her head, and another involving a man hit with a glass bottle (Travis, 2017).

The Metropolitan police say the volume of hate crime they record as Islamophobic attacks has increased sharply in the last four years, with 343 incidents in the 12 months to March 2013, 1,109 in the 12 months to March 2016 and 1,260 in the 12 months to March, 2017 (Travis, 2017).

In Bradford in August 2017, anonymous letters threatening acid attacks on Muslims were posted, that contained an image of a sword and the St George’s flag with the words: ‘Kill scum Muslims’. They questioned why Muslim women wear burqas, stating: ‘We are now going to do acid attacks on anyone who wears the funny black masks around your square & Bradford & other places’ (Halliday, 2017).

These various and multiple forms of non-colour-coded and hybridist racism in the second decade of the twenty-first century are not explained by an abstract

theory of global white supremacy and are better analysed from a (neo-) Marxist perspective (see Cole, 2018b).

Notes

¹ The development of neo-Marxism (the ‘neo’ – ‘new’ – in neo-Marxism refers to theoretical developments in Marxism, post-Marx) needs to be seen in the light of the fact that inevitability and imminence of a general transition to socialism proved to be over-optimistic, and severely compromised. This fact meant that some aspects of Marxism had to be rethought. Specifically, what needed to be understood was the role of capitalist institutions in maintaining their power base. As Leszek Kolakowski (1978) has argued, the common element in theories designated as ‘neo’-Marxist is a concern with the role of capitalist states’ welfare institutions in retarding rather than advancing socialism. The defining features of neo-Marxism are a concern with culture (as in the notion of the forging of a hegemonic culture as elaborated by prominent Italian neo-Marxist Antonio Gramsci) and with ideology (ideas that work in the interests of the ruling class, as in the concept of ideological state apparatuses outlined by French neo-Marxist Louis Althusser). Neo-Marxist analysis should be seen as a supplement to rather than a replacement of Marxism.

² I have not included articles which have so far only been published online because these are not yet assigned a volume and issue number. UK-based CRT articles have been published in journals other than *REE* since January 2012, and there have also been CRT book chapters and books. However, given Gillborn’s reputation on both sides of the Atlantic (in 2012, he was awarded the Derrick Bell Legacy Award from the Critical Race Studies in Education Association ‘for his ground-breaking work on critical race theory’ [Institute of Education/UCL 2012]); the status of *REE* in CRT circles and the stature and high profile within CRT of the authors I discuss, I would argue that the articles analysed here are representative of the field as it now stands. Moreover, as noted earlier, in Cole, 2017a, I looked at a substantive number of both UK and US-based CRT-focused papers, which I also supplemented with other publications by the same author(s) where they illuminated or developed the point(s) being argued. I did not and have not included those articles where CRT is not claimed to be the main line of analysis, nor where it is merely referred to briefly.

³ Hylton coined this expression in his keynote address to the Higher Education Academy: Sociology, Anthropology, Politics (C-SAP) conference, *Critical Race Theory in the UK: What is to be Learnt? What is to be done?* Institute of Education, University of London, 26-26 June 2009.

⁴ In Cole, 2017a (pp. 97-136), I also looked at theoretical developments in CRT in the US.

⁵ The inherent contradiction between CRT and its fore fronting of ‘race’ on the one hand, and (neo) Marxism and the centrality of social class in defining capitalism on the other, is self-evident. However, as exemplified throughout this article, the theories can be mutually informative (see also Cole, 2017a, b).

⁶ For a thorough analysis of CRT, including its origins, varieties and a Marxist response, see Cole, 2017b.

⁷ The following summary of the seven articles draws on Cole, 2017a, pp. 41-96.

⁸ As co-founder of RT, Noel Ignatiev puts it, the ‘abolition of the white race’ means white people *politically* washing away their *socially constructed* ‘whiteness’ and *actual existing* ‘white privilege’, and, in so doing, taking in some ‘blackness’ (Ignatiev 1996, p. 289).

⁹ There are, however, wide differences with respect to age (the younger you are, the more likely you are find them racist); ethnicity (minority ethnic people find them more racist than white people); Labour and Lib Dems more than Tories and EU remainers find ‘golliwogs’ more unacceptable than leavers (Bale, 2017).

¹⁰ Austerity in the UK is beginning to come under attack at the time of writing as the Theresa May Government, fearing a Jeremy Corbyn victory when the next election is called, begins to backtrack on some austerity measures.

¹¹ Chakrabarty’s deployment of the notion of ‘buried alive’ is derived from psychoanalysis and takes on different connotations: life in the womb; horror stories; eternal life imprisonment; as well as the main theme of her chapter – the experiences of racialized existence.

¹² BME is one of two standard official nomenclatures in the UK. The other is BAME (Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic). They are roughly equivalent to ‘people of color’ in the US.

¹³ Gillborn continues to write on CRT, sometimes in collaboration with (a few) others (see, for example, Gillborn, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016; Gillborn et al, 2017; and the papers arising out of ‘The Educational Strategies of the Black Middle Classes Project’ (summarised in Vincent et al (undated)).

¹⁴ Barbara Applebaum (2016) defines Critical Whiteness Studies (CWS) as:

a growing field of scholarship whose aim is to reveal the invisible structures that produce and reproduce white supremacy and privilege. CWS presumes a certain conception of racism that is connected to white supremacy. In advancing the importance of vigilance among white people, CWS examines the meaning of white privilege and white privilege pedagogy, as well as how white privilege is connected to complicity in racism.

¹⁵ ‘Playing the “race” card’ usually refers to white politicians using racism to get votes.

¹⁶ McIntosh and ‘white privilege,’ including Gillborn’s (2008, p. 35) decontextualizing and dehistoricizing of her analysis, are discussed in Cole, 2017b, pp. 39-40.

¹⁷ Troops to Teachers is a two-year course for non-graduate Armed Services leavers that leads to QTS (qualified teacher status) and a degree qualification (Department for Education, 2017).

¹⁸ It is possible that there will be an increase in UK-based CRT analyses, as PhD theses supervised by CRT academics get completed. However, I would suggest that these are likely to be similar in format to the articles discussed in this paper.

¹⁹ These issues are dealt with in detail from a (neo-) Marxist perspective in Cole, 2018b.

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