

Disaster Education

'Race', Equity and Pedagogy

John Preston



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WHAT IS DISASTER EDUCATION?

INTRODUCTION

‘Disaster education’ is a new area of enquiry in the field of education. At present there are few texts which deal directly with public education for emergencies (Shaw, Shiwaku and Takeuchi, 2011 being a notable exception). However, the pedagogical space for preparing the public for disasters is extensive and includes not only school based initiatives and public information campaigns but also family and community learning, adult education and popular culture (what we might consider to be ‘public pedagogies’). Moreover, with technological developments such as social media, citizen journalism and blogging there are increasingly sophisticated ways through which citizens might source information about disasters. These methods of learning are not isolated. New and old media, official discourse and popular culture circulate and feed off each other both in preparing for disasters and as disasters unfold. Such interactions can be considered to be transmedia activities where ‘old media’ (such as television broadcasting) and ‘new media’ interact to form new narratives. For example, in the Tōhoku earthquake and tsunami in Japan in 2011 broadcast media adopted a reflexive approach to social media by reporting on what was being reported by users of Twitter. In turn Twitter users ‘Tweeted’ their own interpretations of what was being broadcast in the media. These reflexive and complex pedagogical relationships mean that disaster education has moved far from simple and didactic relationships between the state and the citizen. The disciplinary boundaries of disaster education are similarly fluid and the literature on the topic can be found within the sociology of disasters, public health and health promotion, humanitarian response, political communication and public relations. In fact there is surprisingly little writing on disaster education in the field of education / pedagogy itself and one of the purposes of this book is to relocate disaster education as a sub-discipline within this field.

Modes of disaster education are broadly related to changes in national policies around citizen preparedness and various terms have been used in the Twentieth and Twenty-first centuries to describe the ways in which citizens were expected to prepare for disasters. ‘*National Defence*’ (prior to World War Two in the United Kingdom) emphasized the nation state as being the key category of survival. The emphasis was on the defence of the state as a holistic, unified and unifying entity of which individuals represented component parts. The move beyond World War Two to *civil defence* rearticulated this relationship as the protection of individuals and families as part of ‘civil society’. Both national and civil defence, at least in the United Kingdom, were primarily concerned with preparation for war although in some countries (such as the United States and Canada) civil defence became associated with preparation for other forms of disaster such as earthquakes or

tornadoes (this was known as ‘dual use’). The spectre of National Defence has been invoked once more by the post 9/11 advent of *Homeland Security*. The term ‘Homeland’ has a dual meaning representing both the nation and familial and community protection (in its most recent articulation it has been called ‘Hometown security’) (Preston, 2009). Two terms associated with homeland security are ‘*resilience*’ and ‘*preparedness*’. ‘Resilience’ is concerned with resources and capabilities to survive a disaster whereas ‘preparedness’ implies vigilance, planning and anticipatory skills in dealing with a crisis. Preparedness has become a common term used in terms of homeland security and disaster planning documentation. Note that resilience and preparedness only implicitly make reference to notions of the national or the civic and in these terms the emphasis is on atomized individuals or families. The terms used, then, show a shifting emphasis of emergency planning from the nation to the family and the individual. This is part of individuation, certainly, but also shows not only an inversion but also an intertwining of the relationship between the individual and the nation state. In ‘National Defence’ the individual is in the service of the nation and individuals are patterned on the survival of the state whereas in preparedness and resilience the individual embodies the values of the state, with a covert form of nationalism in evidence.

Defining disaster

Whether the form of ‘defence’ undertaken is under a system of ‘National Defence’ or a more individuated ‘Civil Defence’ it is ultimately a response to a perceived ‘threat’, or ‘disaster’ to individuals, community and / or the nation state. There are various taxonomies of these ‘threats’. One very simple categorisation is to consider distinctions between ‘natural’ disasters (such as earthquakes, volcanic activity, floods, solar activity and meteors) and anthropogenic threats from human activity (such as terrorism, war, industrial hazards and CBRNe hazards – Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear and explosive threats). These threats are obviously inter-related. Floods resulting from global warming, for example, are obviously ‘natural’ only in so far as industrial production has interfered with the ozone layer. Another distinction is to consider threats as being differentiated through expectation. ‘Relative Risk’ (the relative likelihood of an event occurring) and ‘Relative Impact’ (the damage caused by an event) are two dimensions for locating threats used by the UK government’s ‘National Risk Register’ (Cabinet Office, 2010). Alarmingly, on this scale the UK government locates human pandemic influenza as being both likely and high impact. This taxonomy is perhaps more useful than the natural / anthropogenic distinction in preparing for emergencies as it is orientated towards scale and risk rather than source. However, it somewhat mystifies threats by disengaging with their (frequent) source in human activity. Both the anthropogenic / natural and the risk / impact categorisations are useful policy technologies for categorising and scaling threats but they fail to engage with the social nature of disasters. The definition of disaster for any given society, at any particular historical moment, is a socially constructed, political category rather than a technical one. Whether human or anthropogenic in origin

the designation of ‘threat’ or ‘disaster’ implies a *discontinuity* with previous social relations (Clausen, Conlon, Jager, and Metreveli, 1978). For example, mass unemployment is not usually designated as a ‘disaster’ whereas floods usually are. Moreover, terms associated with disasters such as ‘looter’ or ‘survivor’ or ‘terrorist’ or ‘mass murderer’ in turn create social categories and pathologies. In this book disasters, and circulating terms around disasters, are treated as predominantly social categories.

Pedagogies of preparedness

‘Disaster Education’ is delivered to citizens in various ways including leaflets, public information films, notices and warning sirens, television and radio broadcasting, social media, school curricular, family and community learning and cell phone messaging. Through these media messages citizens prepare for various disasters, consider what they would do in a disaster and think about how they would respond. Because the methods used in informing citizens do not, on the surface appear educational the ways in which preparedness for disasters is transmitted to citizens is often conceptualised through advertising or public relations models of information transmission. Although these models provide some purchase on the transfer of preparedness knowledge, a superior model for preparedness is a pedagogical (or andragogical in the case of adults) one. That is, rather than giving instruction they also engage individuals in learning about emergency situations whether in preparation, response or recovery from a disaster. Implicitly, they are based on models of how individuals learn. Preparedness campaigns aim not only to alter individual cognitions concerning emergencies but individual behaviours, the ways in which they make calculations of costs and benefits of following actions or not, their emotions and even their sense of personhood as a citizen. Various pedagogical devices are used in achieving this and there are various methods by which pedagogies can be classed:-

a. Banking and didactic pedagogies

Banking and didactic preparedness pedagogies are constructed on the basis that they are not intended to be used except in the event of an actual emergency. They exist as a series of didactic instructions or images. These can be delivered in a classroom context or in the home. In many cases it is implied that that citizens are not expected to read, or refer to them in advance but simply to be aware that they exist and to store them. There is a degree of subliminal awareness in the banking of these pedagogies as their very existence is to produce an awareness of at least the possibility of a crisis. ‘Preparing for Emergencies’ (HMSO, 2004), a booklet issued to the entire United Kingdom population to ‘prepare’ them for multiple types of disaster was an example of this type of pedagogy which was to be kept in a ‘safe’ place. These ‘banking pedagogies’ are also found on airline emergency cards which are based around bodily and spatial manipulation. The body is (often schematically) shown in various positions in order to stress the kinds of manipulations which should be followed in the event of an emergency. In the

event of a CBRNe attack this might include ducking, falling to the floor or crouching behind a surface or running in order to reach cover or huddling.

b. Construction kit pedagogies

Construction kit preparedness pedagogies are designed on the basis of DIY (Do it Yourself Instructions) providing guidance which is to be interpreted and acted on by the individual in the event of a crisis. The purpose is not to provide ‘banking’ information but to aid citizens in constructing their own shelters and equipment for survival. Construction kit pedagogies apply to the physical environment and are concerned with construction of a shelter, the use of duct tape in a chemical or biological incident or the storage of food and water. In these construction exercises, simple schematics are used in order to encourage the following of set procedures in building a shelter. For example, in the booklet ‘Protect and Survive’ (1980), which would have been issued (in some form, possibly as newspaper inserts) to homes in the United Kingdom in the event of a forthcoming nuclear war instructions are given for the construction of a basic home shelter (a ‘fall out room’ and ‘inner refuge’) to be constructed from doors, sandbags and other household furniture.

c. Affective

Affective preparedness pedagogies are not designed to deal with the cognitive processes or behavioural skills necessary for protection but rather are designed around the principle that emotional labour is involved in preparedness. The effects of trauma, acceptance of war and the emotional upheaval for children of disaster are concerned with enabling emotional change or management. Often this means ‘facing up’ to the ‘reality’ of what has happened and affective pedagogies are considered to stimulate cognitive and behavioural changes in individuals. For example, the civil defence film ‘Let’s face it’ (FCDA, 1956) was designed to change attitudes towards surviving a possible nuclear attack on the United States away from passivity or fatalism towards a positive emotional attitude to preparedness. This was in turn designed to persuade Americans to actively engage with civil defence efforts.

d. Family and community learning

Family and community learning pedagogies make use of existing societal structures, such as the gendered division of labour, as pedagogical levers. The ways in which families or communities are employed in these pedagogies is complex and rarely is ‘group learning’ the pedagogical technique employed. To start with families, division of labour is implied which is often formally gendered or age related. Men can be portrayed in a construction role, taking on manual tasks or acting as ‘head’ of the preparedness activity whereas women are depicted in a caring role or acting in food storage and preparation. Sometimes these gender roles are slightly subverted in a proto-feminist fashion, but this is the exception rather

than the rule. Community learning is a less common strategy as often the family is regarded as the notional unit of preparedness planning at least in the United Kingdom and United States. In the construction and potential habitation of fallout shelters in the cold war family and community learning techniques were employed. The cold war instructional document ‘The Family Fallout Shelter’ (Office of Civil and Defense Mobilisation, 1959) shows the ‘Father’ constructing the fallout shelter from concrete blocks in a basement whilst the ‘Mother’ is responsible for childcare. This reinforces the existing gendered division of labour. Similarly, the short film of a similar era ‘Occupying a Public Shelter’ (Office of Civil Defense, 1965) shows both gender segregated activities and how a community of shelter inhabitants learns to live together in a shelter during an atomic attack. The emphasis in the film is on ‘community activities’ (collective singing, exercise classes) and on pro-social behaviour.

e. Performance pedagogies

Certain preparedness pedagogies utilise tacit performance theories and dramaturgical techniques (Davis, 2007). Rehearsal of an actual emergency may have several pedagogical purposes. Rehearsal is used to routinise and familiarise individuals and families with preordained rules of behaviour. This is not only to lock in behaviours so that they become engrained into an individual’s habits but also to attempt to remove affective or cognitive processes that may prevent action from being undertaken. Performance also enables individuals or groups to reflect on what has taken place and to consider the ways in which future enactments might be improved, with the aim that the actual ‘performance piece’ in a disaster is optimal. ‘Performance’ is additionally an appeal to audiences wider than those taking part in the preparedness enactment. They are designed to make observers reflect upon what is taking part and consider what their own role might be in these exercises. Although these exercises were common in the cold war in contemporary contexts they are increasingly used to rehearse disaster scenarios by the emergency services.

f. Public pedagogies

Public pedagogies take place in ‘... spaces, sites, and languages of education and learning that exist outside schools’ (Sandlin and Burdick, 2010, p. 349) in particular domains of popular culture which are not frequently considered to be an educational arena. In terms of preparedness, popular cultural forms can embody lessons about preparedness in a reflexive manner. As will be discussed later in the book a number of contemporary movies are concerned with a ‘zombie apocalypse’ where a virus means that the ‘undead’ overwhelm the living who fight for survival. These films include crude lessons on personal preparedness. However, they have in turn spawned a real group: the ‘Zombie Protection Initiative’ (ZPI) who not only organise (ironic) ‘zombie preparedness’ classes and initiatives in the United States but who also support real preparedness education initiatives organised by FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency).

The above list is not exhaustive and a single taxonomic classification does not always fit an individual preparedness pedagogy which may be classed along a number of axis. For example, a preparedness campaign might be devised to be both affective and construction kit, engaging emotions through a practical project. It must also be noted that as well as official (governmental) preparedness pedagogies there might also be pedagogies which can be described as ‘folk’ preparedness pedagogies. These do not exist at the level of official discourse, but rather represent individual depictions of the best strategies to undertake in an emergency. The most extreme example of folk pedagogies are those which advocate the negation of government advice. For example, in impending nuclear attack it was likely (and for some commentators rational) that some individuals would hold the ‘folk’ belief that they would be better off to ignore government instructions as nothing that they did would aid their survival. At the other extreme, survivalists construct their own folk strategies in preparing for a crisis being hyper alert and vigilant to emergencies. In practice citizens use both folk and official pedagogies and we should be careful in extrapolating from preparedness text to citizen interpretation (although text is useful in considering the aims and orientations of the state).

Moreover, the growth of ‘disaster education’ in our everyday lives becomes a deep form of ‘pedagogisation’ aside from considering individual pedagogies. Wherever we travel we are bombarded with security alerts and warning messages and are engaged in routines of securitisation (removing our shoes when passing through airport security, watching for ‘suspicious’ packages or individuals). Our media is obsessed with breaking news on the latest disaster or crisis (which is vastly expanded given social media and its transmedia incorporation into mainstream broadcasting). Themes of preparedness and disaster are everywhere in popular culture from films about disaster to (even) personal survival manuals. For Basil Bernstein, these immersive pedagogies of security would be seen to be indicative of the totally pedagogised society involving ‘...the pedagogisation of life in which learning is an activity that is conducted *endlessly* and ‘in which the State is moving to ensure that there’s no space and time which isn’t pedagogised’ (Bernstein, 2001, p. 377 quoted in Ball, 2008, p. 221, my italics). Individuals become subject to constant pedagogisation of all spheres of their lives as ‘lifelong learning’ (Bonal and Rambla, 2009). The TPS is not neutral as:-

pedagogic modalities are crucial realisations of symbolic control, and thus of the process of cultural production and reproduction. Symbolic control, through its pedagogic modalities, attempts to shape and distribute forms of consciousness, identity and desire.

(Bernstein & Solomon, 1999, p. 269 quoted in Bonal and Rambla, 2009)

So ‘disaster education’ not only operates on multiple axes of pedagogy but also becomes a way in which identities and subjectivities are reinforced and formed. Pedagogy is a mode of cultural production and reproduction and this means that should consider disaster education not as a neutral technology of learning but one

which is bound up with political and social categories. Hence a *critical* approach to disaster education is necessary.

STRUCTURE OF THE BOOK

The chapters in the book consider disaster education over the historical period 1945 to the present day. The emphasis of the book is primarily on nuclear and radiological forms of disaster examining forms of disaster education in the United Kingdom and United States around plans for nuclear war during the cold war, disaster education for terrorist ‘dirty bombs’ and preparedness and resilience for radiological disasters. The emphasis on nuclear and radiological disasters is chosen partly as this represents a ‘hidden history’ of disaster education and also that, even within these supposedly ‘neutral’ and quasi-apocalyptic plans for disasters there are profound implications for social justice. Each chapter examines questions around disaster education which are applicable to many different forms of emergencies. In particular, I consider how disaster education is formulated in policy, how does it reinforce and create social categories in its implementation, how does it change conceptions of citizenship, how does it cross over to popular culture and pedagogy, how has social media changed disaster education and what are new forms and resistances to disaster education. As discussed in the acknowledgements, the book draws on two research projects which use a variety of methods including discourse analysis of disaster education, interviews and digital ethnography.

Chapter two considers the conceptual framework. It considers an approach for thinking about the role of ‘race’ and ‘whiteness’ within disaster education. I consider the ways in which understanding disaster education through a social justice ethic from whiteness studies and CRT (Critical Race Theory) leads to an enhanced comprehension of the hidden assumptions of disaster education. However, in doing so I distinguish between prosthetic, concrete and abstract forms of racial oppression each of which are implicated in a wider ethic of preparedness and pedagogy.

Chapter three considers how specific forms of disaster education (in particular what was called civil defence) such as ‘Protect and Survive’, a campaign from the 1970s / 1980s with the aim of preparing the British public for nuclear war, reinforce differential forms of racial and class oppression. ‘Civil defence pedagogies’ normalise continuous emergency through educational channels such as school, community and adult education. Using critical whiteness studies, and critiques of white supremacy from critical race theory, as a conceptual base, the protection of whiteness, and particularly the white middle class family, is considered to be centrally important to civil defence in education. Civil defence is not only classed and state-centered but a racialised and eugenic discourse where the state considers not necessarily the survival of the majority of white people, but the continuity of whiteness to be prioritised above the survival of people of colour. Within these policies the enterprising white, middle class, suburban family has provided a key role as main reference, beneficiary, activist and supporter of civil

defence pedagogies. Through the use of policy analysis and documentation from the US in the 1950s and the UK in the 1980s, I discuss representations of the family, race and class in civil defence pedagogies. Although whiteness is contextualized by geography and history, there is congruence in terms of the eugenic tendencies of these seemingly innocuous pedagogies.

Chapter four considers how disaster education is formed in policy. Preparedness for disasters and emergencies has been part of public information campaigns in the United Kingdom such as 'Protect and Survive', 'Preparing for Emergencies' and recently the Swine Flu preparedness campaign. These campaigns are frequently mocked in the media and popular culture for their kitsch value or their triviality in preparing for a catastrophic event. However, these campaigns are highly sophisticated ideological devices, employing multi-modal and pedagogical techniques, and covertly conveying messages concerning the desirability of survival for different groups. With regard to this last point, preparedness materials have been critiqued for their social class bias, heteronormativity, scripting of gendered roles, assumptions concerning ability / disability and particularly their racism. Using critical whiteness studies, and critical race theory, several analysis have considered that whiteness is 'scripted' as the proper category of survival in contemporary preparedness materials. Specifically, these materials use white people as cultural referents and reward the material practices of whites whilst pathologising disadvantaging people of colour. However, the question of intentionality remains in that, unless we imagine a Strangelovian figure at work, notionally anti-racist civil servants, designers and copywriters produce violently white supremacist (in the critical race theory sense of the term) advice. This chapter analyses historical documents from the national archives and interviews with scientists and policy makers who construct preparedness materials. It considers that the construction of preparedness materials is a site of contestation rather than consensus although ultimately there is an implicit 'asocial contract' between the state and the white middle classes that guarantees their survival above 'others'.

In chapter five I consider the wider implications of 'disaster education' for citizenship education. Crises in national security and citizenship education have rarely been articulated in the same theoretical frame. Using state plans for continuity of government (COG) I examine how plans for state collapse and reconstruction are articulated through existing forms of citizenship regime and pedagogy. Preparedness is becoming embedded within citizenship education as is the notion of security as a pedagogical concern. Continuities between citizenship education and 'preparedness' and an emphasis on citizenship education against particular conceptions of extremism and adult education initiatives such as the Citizen Corps are examined through critical policy analysis. Although these initiatives are embedded within national histories and politics, the continuities between earlier citizenship initiatives in the cold war and current initiatives in what has been promoted as the 'war on terror' is emphasised. It is argued that conceptions of national identity and (centrally) whiteness, as well as changing security contexts, are necessary in understanding the ways in which citizenship

education is becoming concerned with the responsive citizen as part of the national security architecture.

In chapter six I turn my attention to the ways in which forms of public pedagogy – popular survivalist literature, film and television – have portrayed preparedness pedagogies. In a range of nuclear apocalyptic television dramas (such as ‘Threads’, ‘The Day After’ and ‘24’) and recent films (‘Cloverfield’) the survival and extinction of *whiteness* are counterpoised as rhetorical devices. These films use pedagogical fictions to offer instruction and warn against the racial other. In counterpoint to these discourses there is an emerging critique of largely American post-war nuclear apocalyptic science fiction and US civil defence. This analysis extends our critique of homeland security but is limited to perspectives on the nuclear apocalyptic from *within* whiteness. Through examining Afrofuturist narratives of the nuclear apocalyptic such as Sun Ra’s ‘Nuclear War’, I use critical race theory (CRT) to critique Eurocentric governmental, media and critical perspectives on civil defence and homeland security.

Chapter seven considers how even categories of life (‘aliveness’) and death in disaster education and survivalist literature are racialised. Through a consideration of mass casualty plans I consider how it is often only in death that facets of multiculturalism come to be seen to be important in disaster education. In contrast, through an analysis of ‘popular survivalist’ literature white bodies are considered to be alive, agentic, ultra-mobile and even transcendent of genres of race.

Chapter eight considers the impact of new technologies and social media on disaster education. It examines how social media tools such as Twitter and Facebook as well as new technologies such as smart phones have led to a new way of conceptualising disaster education. It has also led to a reconceptualisation of the way in which we look at preparedness in terms of technology and agency. The chapter considers social media responses to disasters and considers that cyberspace, in terms of disaster education, is a racialised zone.

In the conclusion to the book, chapter nine, I consider accommodations and resistances to disaster education. I consider possible reforms to current modes of disaster education but question the extent to which dominant social science and policy paradigms are equipped to enable disaster education to become socially just.

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CHAPTER 2

SOCIAL JUSTICE, WHITENESS AND DISASTER EDUCATION

INTRODUCTION

'Racism in the news
Still one-sided news
Saying whites find food
prey for the national guard ready to shoot
Cause them blacks loot
New Orleans in the morning, afternoon, and night
Hell No We Ain't Alright
Fires, earthquakes, tsunamis
I don't mean to scare
Wasn't this written somewhere?
Disgraces all I see is black faces moved out to all these places'

Public Enemy 'Hell No, We Ain't Alright' (Public Enemy, 2006)

Hurricane Katrina and the damage it inflicted on New Orleans in 2005 has become an almost iconic disaster in terms of revealing underlying racism, class inequality and other forms of discrimination with particular regard to age disability in the United States. As Ladson-Billings (2006) states, with particular reference to the racist dimensions of the disaster, Katrina is akin to '...a song, an expression, or an image that gets stuck in our brains. As a consequence, we cannot stop singing it, saying it, or seeing it' (v). Iconography can be dangerous as it means that disaster events can be decontextualised from their continuity with existing social relations. Katrina can be seen as 'exceptional' or we can talk about New Orleans or the United States 'post-Katrina' as if social inequalities have changed. However, it is useful to reflect on the various dimensions of the reactions to this particular disaster which made it particularly socially unjust.

Firstly, the possibility of a major Hurricane and disaster in this area was widely reported in the media and predicted by respected scientific experts. However, at the level of Federal government, President George Bush was quoted as saying that no-one could have predicted the Katrina Hurricane and his wife, Laura Bush, was fatalistic regarding Katrina and was quoted as saying that the poor 'always' die in such disasters.

Secondly, the response of FEMA (the Federal Emergency Management Agency) was poor. FEMA director Michael Brown ordered that emergency vehicles and personnel not to be sent into the area unless local or state officials

explicitly requested them, but due to no working communication systems there was no way that these could be ordered. All FEMA phone lines were busy or disconnected and proposals to send 500 airboats to aid rescue efforts were blocked by FEMA. FEMA's inadequate and unequal response led to social dislocation and homelessness but many of the socially disruptive incidents associated with the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina (eg rape, murder, looting, disorder) never happened but were still associated with people of colour in New Orleans in the media and police reports (Dwyer and Drew, 2005; quoted in Ladson-Billings, 2006). Thousands of evacuees had to live in the Superdome where they had to survive with no running water, food, electricity, toilets or medical help.

Finally, the reporting of the disaster also had a racial and class bias. The Associated press published two photographs of New Orleans residents carrying food obtained from a grocery store. "The whites were described as carrying 'bread and soda from a grocery store' that they had found, the black man pictured was characterized as having 'loot(ed) a grocery store'" (Marable, 2008, p. x). These visual representations were also mirrored in the reporting of the events of Hurricane Katrina in various news media. For example, the London Financial Times described New Orleans as 'a city of rape' and 'a war zone' with thousands subjected to 'looting' and 'arson' (see Marable, 2008 for a full discussion of the above).

Katrina illustrates more than any other recent disaster the materiality of race (and of course, class) in state planning and response to emergencies. In listing the above atrocities, which verge on the genocidal, around the storm that is Katrina there is a tendency for us to want to focus on this disaster as unique and marginalize other disasters or events in terms of their inequalities. The contention of this book is that the genocide of Katrina was no accident and was yet another example of the eugenics of disaster planning and disaster education. The contention of this book is that in every disaster, and within disaster education itself, concerns of social justice are often (tacitly or overtly) placed at the margins so that the net result is inequitable, reinforcing existing inequalities or creating new ones. Incidents such as Katrina illustrate the myth of neutrality in disaster education: that it is a benign, technical discipline to help people to prepare for emergencies. Rather I aim to reveal the hidden assumptions around such information that exacerbate and create inequalities.

DISASTERS, EUGENICS AND 'WHITENESS'

That disaster education exists to save 'lives' and allow for the continuation of 'society' and (in the case of nuclear war or 'extinction' events) the survival of 'humanity' suggests that these concepts ('lives' and 'humanity') are universal and neutral conceptions. This is not the case at least in historical perspective. Notions of what is meant as a viable human, a viable life and the continuation of humanity have their foundations in debates concerning eugenics where such concepts were disputed. Eugenics has often been considered to be a historical relic, located in the work of early Victorian geneticists and in the genocidal policies of Nazi Germany. It is often implied that eugenics has no contemporary relevance to contemporary

policy. However, this understanding of eugenics has been supplanted by work which considers eugenics to be central in understanding social policy across a range of national contexts, *contemporary as well as historical* (Burdett, 2006). Eugenics is based on understandings of genetics that locate social and moral defects in the genetic material ('bio-plasm') of individuals and families. Historically, this has led to the codification, regulation, sterilisation and (in some circumstances) extermination of those individuals considered to be genetically aberrant (Bruinius, 2006; Ordovery, 2003). In addition, individuals and families of 'good' genetic stock were encouraged to produce offspring (Stern, 2005) through pro-natalist policies. Another strand of eugenic thought is the fear that 'over civilisation' would lead to a situation whereby Darwinist processes of 'survival of the fittest' would not apply and those with 'superior' genes would become complacent, being out bred by those of poor genetic stock. According to Sharp (2007) these Darwinist ideologies of 'survival of the fittest' have been most influential in determining civil defence policies in the US (both historical and contemporary). In practice, the 'fittest' in disaster education is often tacitly taken to be the white middle class heteronormative family. Eugenics is, remarkably, still influential in disaster education tacitly specifying the 'value' of different lives and rewarding the behaviour of certain favoured groups whilst punishing or disadvantaging others. Groups who are favoured or disadvantaged are segmented (tacitly rather than overtly) on the familiar axis of class, race, gender, ability, faith and sexuality and frequently at the intersections of these axis. Therefore, even though the emphasis of the analysis in this book is racial discrimination in disaster education this axis intersects with other classifications. So although whiteness studies is used as a theoretical frame in this analysis whiteness is inflected by other dimensions of personhood and positionality.

Whiteness needs defining and rather than being a biological or socially constructed category, the framing of 'white' or 'whiteness' is a moral and political category (governments, states and collectives determine who is white and can act for or against white interests) which requires both material practice and symbolic performance for its maintenance (Ignatiev and Garvey, 1996). Whiteness is often an implicit facet of race and class formation which, until *relatively* recently has passed without comment in the US and the UK (Frankenberg, 1993; 1999; Reay, 2005; Ignatiev, 1995; Roediger, 1999; 2002; 2005 ; Bonnett, 2000; Preston, 2007). Work on whiteness studies draws on an often unacknowledged history of writing by people of colour (a long historical tradition of black radicalism including Fanon, 1986; Du Bois, 1989, 1999, Sojourner Truth, 1998 and more recently the work of hooks, 1989). Work across different cultural contexts and historical periods means that whiteness(es) refers to different formations and boundaries of whiteness, but its flexibility and sometime 'fuzziness' does not mean that those belonging to the category white do not exercise forms of cultural and economic domination as part of an over-arching system of white supremacy (Allen, 2001, 2004; Leonardo, 2005; Gillborn, 2005, 2006).

Given this emphasis on whiteness as both social construction and system of social domination, critical race theory (CRT) is a useful conceptual apparatus for considering the relationship between race, class and pedagogies including those

around civil defence and preparedness. Notions of white supremacy (a political economic system that benefits those labelled as ‘white’ economically, socially and psychologically), interest convergence (legal and social moves towards equity will usually be supported if they benefit the white majority) and betrayal (that moves towards equity and equal rights will be absolutely withdrawn if they compromise white interests) (Bell, 1980; 1989; 1992) are congruent with the discursive development of disaster education. In addition, the critique of whiteness from critical whiteness studies is important in comprehending these pedagogies and their inequities. Firstly, it is essential to de-reify whiteness by seeing it as a socially constructed identity which is historically contingent and liable to change over time. Whiteness in 1950s America (in the early days of cold war civil defence) had a different historical meaning to whiteness in 1980s England (in the latter days of civil defence), for example. In the former context, it was associated with the development of suburbia and the assimilation of various white American immigrant groups into the suburban middle classes. In the latter it was a racial form which had developed from imperialism and the welfare state, which was both consolidated by state expansion and new British imperialisms of the 1980s, but also undercut by marketisation and mass unemployment (Bonnett, 2000). Secondly from CRT an understanding not only of white privilege but also its structural cognate (Leonardo, 2005) white supremacy which enables an understanding of how whiteness works through white racial practices (racism and ethnic preference) and institutional and structural embeddedness. In terms of civil defence, white supremacy works through eugenic discourses and a particular understanding of ‘humanity’ which explains why white people, particularly those from higher class backgrounds, were particularly favoured in civil defence pedagogies, their value reinforced by both their whiteness and their class position.

As whiteness is a political, social and moral category rather than a biological one it can be considered that the ways it is associated with bodies is not always corporeal. Rather, whiteness (and other racial identifications) have a *quasi-corporeality*. It is a misrecognition to refer to whiteness as corporeal but it seems as if it is fixed to bodies. This quasi-corporeality allows whiteness to function both in a *prosthetic* sense and as *capital*. These represent a different way of thinking about ‘whiteness as property’ as usually considered in CRT and I will consider them in turn.

WHITENESS AS PROSTHETIC

At a recent conference on critical race theory in London, a keynote speaker commented on the ‘elephant in the room’, being the large number of white people who were in attendance. The fact of whiteness had conveniently escaped the largely white audience (although it was starkly visible to the people of colour there) or if they were aware of it they were sufficiently politically astute not to mention it. For the white participants (including me as I am a ‘so-called white’) at the conference the discursive space, in which whiteness was being critiqued, had allowed them to believe that they had temporarily transcended their racial privilege. Whiteness was a convenient *prosthetic* for them which could be

discarded at the door through their participation in a worthy and critical event. Of course, whiteness is always in play in social settings but the ways in which whiteness is conveniently left behind by whites is of obvious political importance. Whiteness gains some of its symbolic power through its seeming ability to be attached and detached (or suspended) from notionally white bodies. This is in opposition to positions on whiteness that consider whiteness to be biologically 'real' and visually attached to subjects or to be socially attached to subjects through racialisation. It considers that whiteness is not only a form of personal property but that it is a form of property with prosthetic qualities. Of course, in most contexts whiteness is always attached to 'white' bodies but it is useful to consider the ways in which personal whiteness can be seemingly removed from subjects who seek to transcend it. The prosthetic nature of whiteness can be considered to be one of McIntosh's (1997) 'hidden privileges' of whiteness in that white people don't have to be classified by their race in all contexts. Decontextualisation through the prosthetic nature of whiteness is a further privilege.

Problematically, both critics and advocates of 'whiteness studies' frequently fetishise the object of their chagrin or desire as eagerly as they seek to critique or dismantle it. That is, they discursively attach whiteness to bodies as much as they accept the idea (with most advocates of whiteness studies) that race is socially constructed. This is particularly evident from those who adopt a materialist or critical realist perspective on whiteness studies where there is a desire to ascribe realism to racial identifications or to materially ground race in modes of production. In terms of a critical realist perspective, for example, Kaufman (2006) critiques whiteness studies on several grounds. In particular, he considers that the shared perceptual reality of 'whiteness' (or 'lightness') means that it has perceptually tangible qualities that might denote a 'real' biological preference. He considers that humans are 'hard wired' to perceive race. Their '...pre-conscious auto-focus tunes me in as white and my cousins as non-white' (p. 237). Kaufman conflates the perception of a 'racial' reality with the reality of race in ascribing any significance to differences in human skin pigmentation. Unlike domestic cats where colour of fur is not a significant factor in cat's status hierarchies or their 'politico-economic' structures Kaufman considers that there might be a 'sociobiological imperative' (p. 249) for a preference for light-skinned women (p. 249) although race and class may play a part. Therefore, for Kaufman, whiteness is established not due to power or violence but as '...socially 'real' limits to identity construction were placed on WASPs by the way we process colour impressions' (p. 236) just '...as people see discrete colours (albeit with fuzzy boundaries) in the human rainbow despite a genetic continuum' (p. 237). Our perceptions of discrete colours is a poor analogy as the mere ordering of the colours of the rainbow does not mean that we pay more attention to one colour than another, privileging it in a social hierarchy. Furthermore, Kaufman considers that, in his terms, the era of white politico-economic success is a mere moment but the 'moment' which he speaks of in the title of the paper is indeed a long one, spanning at least seven hundred years of white supremacy, colonialism and imperialism. He states that 'We should not deify white people. In the annals of

human history, the strong politico-economic performance of light skinned people is short, dating from no earlier than 1600' (p. 240). This 'strong politico-economic performance' (which could also be referred to as processes of imperialism, slavery, colonialism and genocide) since 1600 involved a substantial degree of killing, raping and enslavement of people of colour. In addition, one should not take the brevity of a moment to be indicative of its benign nature. It was no consolation to the Jewish people that Nazism lasted barely twelve years, for example. It is an underestimate, even an insult, to consider this is a '...(temporary) period of light-skinned civilization success that produces a 'psychic wage for whites' (p. 242). The implication of Kaufman's argument is that whiteness is a biologically natural category and only incidentally linked to political and economic forms of domination. However, this is based on incorrect analogies with visual phenomena and a romantic history of whiteness that does not consider structures of power.

Rather than consider whiteness to be inscribed on bodies the metaphor of whiteness as property liberates us from considering whiteness to be biologically inherent to those individuals described as 'white' and from economic conceptions where race is interpellated by capital. The physicality of property means that it can also be considered to be supra-human, not attached to the person, what I refer to as a prosthetic form of whiteness. According to Lury (1998) prosthetic culture means that '...classifications of genre – of gender, class, race, sexuality and age or other natural and social categories – no longer inhere in the individual as they did in plural or synthetic culture; instead they are seen as the effects of (mechanical and perceptual) prostheses' (p. 17). However, a prosthetic is not a neutral attachment and considerations of power are important to Lury '...it's not to imply that all the members of Euro-American societies participate equally or on the same terms in this culture; nor is it to ignore the contradictory hierarchies and exclusions that are an integral part of this shift' (p. 18). Whiteness can be 'outcontextualised' from the body: 'In the latter process, the previously naturally or socially determined aspects of self identity are taken out of context and refashioned. This is not simply a process of de- and re-contextualisation, but a reconstitution or regrouping in order to make visible the ability of a thing, an object, a part to be taken out of context' (p. 19). The use of the prosthesis relies on power. 'Access to resources is therefore central to this doing, experimental self. But, equally important...is knowledge and perspective' (Skeggs, 2004, p. 139) but such (em)powered individuals possess a relational capacity which is '....the ability to be disembodied and then re-embodied at will, that is, to be disembedded from specific social relations to be demarcated, without gender, class, sexuality or age, and then to display a combination of such natural and social characteristics as required through an assertion of a claim to the significance of their effects' (Lury, 1998, p. 24).

Although Lury and Skeggs primarily consider the concept of the prosthetic primarily in discussions of gender and class respectively, Pugliese (2005) considers that the race of 'minoritised others' is considered to be prosthetic as opposed to the bodies of whites. Race is a 'non-originary, iterable and thus tropic (because prosthetic) status of race and its various laws, categories, genres and typologies' (p. 362). Any differences to whiteness '...must be imported from the 'outside' and,

in the hands of the forensic pathologist, symbolically grafted onto the schematic figure of the white template' (p. 358). Racial prosthetics both code the white body and the bodies of others:-

They are non-normative add ons that supplement the seemingly unracial universal (white) body. It achieves and maintains its universal status through the exclusion of non-white racial differences, whilst simultaneously needing to supplement its homogenous totality with an array of racial prosthetics...These racial prosthetics are also a technics of white supremacy, as they emerge as yet another example of the objectification and instrumentalisation of the other / non-white body

(Pugliese, 2005, p. 359, quoted in Preston, 2007)

Pugliese's sense of the 'racial prosthetic' is that race is marked on the bodies of non-white others as a deviation from whiteness. In pathology racial markers literally have to be drawn onto a notionally white masculine body. However, whiteness *itself* can be considered to be prosthetic. Grabham (2009) considers that the use of surgery can be a way in which whiteness is prosthetically derived. Both in terms of cosmetic surgery and the trauma surgeries received by Iraq war veterans whiteness is flagged corporeally onto the skin. Similarly, 'In post-human conceptions of race there are "...available modifications to skin colour (what might be called melaninic) strategies including activities such as using a sun bed, skin lightening materials, modes of dress, 'passing' in real life or in virtual communities' (Preston, 2007, p. 88). However, these prosthetic alterations can be considered to be part of a repertoire within a genre (of race) rather than transcendence of race itself. Alternatively, in what might be referred to as transhuman conceptions race as a genre can be transcended. This is closer to Lury's (1998) definition of the prosthetic. That is, the concept of race may be left aside as so much biological meat and individuals may transcend their humanity as in Extropian conceptions of humanity in which the *ubermensch* transcends not only category but categorisation. A transhumanist conception of the human would be a literal, rather than metaphorical or figurative, Deleuzian BwO (Body without organs) in which 'race' as genre disappears.

In extreme masculinities (hypermasculinities although even hypermasculinity itself is not a unitary discourse, Brown, 2006) for example there is a conception that the body itself might be transcended and that corporeal categories may be surpassed. In extreme body modification, body building and sculpturing for example there is a notion that the body is not only a project but a material caging device to be transcended and overcome, breaking out of corporeality. In hypermasculine body projects 'The body...has become a cyborg, a machine of simulation that gives mind and body a different ontology' (Goldberg, 1995, p. 237). This does not just concern overcoming the restrictions of masculine corporeality but also overcoming whiteness, at least in its modernist sense as a corporeal whiteness. As an example, the ruling class, white, masculine body in elite English public schools can be considered to be in tension between being visibly white and the weakness of corporeality (Preston, 2007). Whiteness is

considered to be something that comes from within rather than being inscribed on the skin. Rather than being 'born white', whiteness has to be made which involves punishing the corporeal body through hard physical exercise and punishment. This reaffirms the body as 'white' through its transcendence of corporeality. The body is not significant and whiteness (seemingly) comes from within as if it were 'white spirit'. Ultimately, the overcoming and simultaneous reinscribing of whiteness requires whiteness to be written against the 'other'. This can be considered to be a nonintersectionality, or perhaps deterritorialisation, rather than an intersectionality in that through corporeal transcendence whiteness is both reinforced and nullified. Transcendence of the genre of 'race' in hypermasculine whiteness reinscribes the fixity of race on the bodies of racialised others. Whiteness as a 'prosthetic' belies the horror / terror of whiteness in terms of current practices of white supremacy. White privilege does not occur behind the backs of others but on the backs of others (Leonardo, 2004). Rather than see whiteness as a *technological* prosthetic it is more appropriate to consider it to be a skin trade whereby the prosthetic of whiteness is a prosthetic 'flesh suit' of the type worn by the serial killer Ed Gein, Gein 'flayed' the skin of his victims to turn them into a 'second skin' to perform as a woman. This is also the central conceit of the film *'The Silence of the Lambs'* (1991) when Hannibal Lecter states that 'he coverts' the skins of others. Whiteness is similarly a prosthetic the performance of which is based on the extraction (symbolically or materially) of the value of others. The fantasy is one of white reanimation that is whiteness can reconstruct itself as a new racial formation – the modern has died and it is time for the simultaneously pre-modern and post-human (see Preston, 2007). The use of whiteness as if it were prosthetic, then, is dependent on white supremacy and not only metaphorically on the 'bodies' of others. That is, real violence is implicated in the process in that 'flexible whiteness' is dependent on the (supposed) viscerality and 'locked in-ness' of the bodies of people of colour. As Skeggs (2004) considers with relation to gender and class:-

Some groups (such as white working class women) do not have access to class as an 'identity', to be deployed as a resource; they are also forced to perform gender, fixed in place as naturalized, regularly pathologised

(Skeggs, 2004, p.77 – 78)

Skeggs' analysis can be extrapolated to other dimensions of intersectionality. In the case of disaster education, the hypermasculine (attempted) transcendence of whiteness is dependent on fixing in place the racial status of others as embodied and visceral. I will illustrate the concept of prosthetic whiteness in later chapters but will return to it particularly in chapter seven when I discuss how 'survivalist' discourses have impacted upon disaster education.

WHITENESS AS CAPITAL

As well as considering whiteness to be a form of property and a prosthetic it can also be considered to be a form of capital in the Marxist sense. In order to consider this, and to move beyond conceptions of 'racialisation' of labour we need to

consider the meaning of capitalism and capital in Marxist theory. Fundamentally, Marx's critique of capitalism cannot be reduced to the exploitation of one 'class' by another (this could be called a C1 and C2 model of 'class' or *concrete 'class' domination model*) in which racialisation is sometimes related to the mode of production. Racial projects in capitalism must be interpreted at a deeper level of abstraction than at the level of concrete (racialised) labour and the materialisation (fetishisation) of capitalist production in a particular time period as employing differently raced humans whose labour power is fundamentally homogenous. A project that aims to integrate CRT and the Marxist critique of capitalism must place race not only (as Mills and Young suggest) at the 'base' of capitalist production but as a first principle at a high level of abstraction, linking it to the Marxist concept of value and the commodity as the 'cell form' of capitalism. Similarly, concrete racism or white supremacy (where whites oppress people of colour) only grasps part of the story of racial domination under capitalism. Charles Mills considers that liberal contractualism results in an exploitative exchange relation between R1 (whites) and R2 (people of colour) categories of persons forming the taxonomies of racial exploitation that forms the 'material base' of white supremacy (Mills, 2003, p, 188). Like Marxist exploitation, the relations between R1 and R2 are naturalised, but rather than the extraction of surplus value, it is whiteness as property that operates behind the backs of the contract between R1 and R2 (Mills, 2003, 191). Mill's hence suggests that 'whiteness' can be part of production relations as part of the base of production but this differs from classical Marxism in terms of considering race to be part of the '...effective power of persons and productive forces' (Mills, 2003, p.167).

Cole (2009a, p. 21) follows Mills in suggesting that 'race' needs to be considered as part of the base of production and considers that the work of Delgado is a useful corrective to CRT in distinguishing between 'idealist' and 'materialist' wings. The latter is considered to be compared with 'economic' factors (e.g. profit, the labour market the interests of elite groups) whereas the former is concerned with discourses, words and symbols. Cole considers a 'materialist' orientation of CRT to be most productive in aligning CRT with Marxism. However, his conception of 'materialist' is only one Marxist conception of materialism and crucially a conception that often considers the primacy of concrete (class) rather than abstract (capitalist) domination with regard to race: '...class exploitation and class struggle are constitutive of capitalism and racism' (Cole, 2007, p. 115). Rather than being a system of concrete (class) domination capitalism represents an objective form of domination rather than the '...many dominating the few' (Postone, 1996, p. 125). It is domination by social labour where '...labour will create alien property and property will create alien labour' (Marx, 1993, p. 238). This is an abstract form of domination rather than a form of market or class domination being '...the domination of people by abstract, quasi-independent structures of social relations, mediated by commodity determined labour; which Marx tries to grasp with his categories of value and capital' (Postone, 1996, p. 126). Marxist categories of class therefore operate at a lower level of abstraction and capitalism is not a system of class domination but a system of capitalist domination, ultimately domination by social labour. Marx's theory of concrete

class groupings in capital is a ‘...richer, more variegated picture of social groupings and their politics’ (p. 315) than a simple two class model. For example, Marx includes references to the ‘middle classes’ and the ‘dangerous class’ (Marx, 1993, p. 360). There are also questions as to whether Marx had developed a complete theory of class rather than a ‘first approximation’ as to class formation. So although capitalism is fundamentally a class society, the ultimate form of social domination is not class relations rather ‘Labour itself constitute a social mediation in lieu of overt social relations’. Social domination in capitalism ‘...cannot be grasped adequately in terms of the overtly social relations between people or groups – *including classes*’ (Postone, 1996, p. 153, my italics) without an understanding of capitalism’s role in social mediation class is ‘an empty phrase’ (Marx, 1993, p. 100).

Like concrete class domination where ownership of either capital or labour are significant, concrete racial domination (R1, R2) can mean that race is considered to be ownership rather than phenotype. In theories of white supremacy (of concrete racial domination) whiteness is often considered to be *personal* ‘property’ (‘whiteness as property’, Harris, 1993 and a ‘possessive investment’ Lipsitz, 2003). From a different conceptual basis, posthumanist or transhumanist (cyborgian) conceptions / critiques of race in which race is a prosthetic also capture something of whiteness as material possession, rather than inherent phenotypical characteristic (Grabham, 2009). In ruling ‘class’ conceptions of whiteness, race is considered to be both material and prosthetic (Preston, 2007). Race as property is seemingly reproduced through biological processes of human breeding (we implicitly accept that a child’s ‘race’ is derived from their parents) and gains a quasi-materiality through biological interpretations of race as a material category. However, in both the ‘whiteness as property’ and the ‘prosthetic whiteness’ literature the analysis of ‘property’ relies upon a pre-capitalist notion of property as a claim to value. Race as property and the racial contract fetishise the nature of race as only being an individual’s possession rather than as part of the social relations of production under capitalism – capital in Marx’s sense of the term. According to Mill’s (2003) it requires a conceptual move from property to capital to consider how race might work within capitalism:-

I do think that attempting to incorporate whiteness-as-property into an *expanded conception of the relations of production* would represent a promising line of research for the necessary transformation of historical materialism

(Mills, 2003, p. 173: my italics)

Analogously, the laptop I am writing this on is property and only acquires the status of ‘capital’ in the capitalist mode of production. Similarly, whiteness as property becomes ‘capital’ in capitalism as it can act as a surveillance mechanism for capitalists, as a means to discipline other workers through divide and rule, as a way of imposing differential rates of exploitation, to reduce white workers necessary labour time (by super exploitation of people of colour) and (fundamental

to all of these) to establish whiteness as visually salient (Alcoff, 1999). Race has a 'use value' for capitalist production (in the ways described above as part of 'race management', Roediger, 2009).

In the longue dureé (from the establishment of whiteness, which proceeds capitalism, to the present day) of concrete racial domination the specificity of capitalist production brings about a new form of racism: abstract racial domination: which is based upon race as part of the social relations of capitalism *as a form of capital* rather than as a peculiarity or property of labour (racialisation or a racial project) as in concrete racial domination (the subordination of one racial group by another). I will examine this by, firstly, discussing the notion of abstract domination in the work of Postone.

As the discussion above indicates the analysis of race as capital is a different form of Marxist analysis to that which considers race to be an epiphenomena of capitalism. If critical whiteness studies and Marxism are to be engaged conceptually and empirically then it is important to engage 'class' itself not as a social classification but through Marx's conceptual categories. Paradoxically, this means stepping back from 'class', at least initially, as I unfold Marx's abstract categories (Marx, 1993, 2008) which are not about class as the primary relation but rather concern capital as a dynamic property, as 'value in motion'. This leads to an understanding of 'race' which is distinct from Marxist theories of racialisation and which clarifies CRT understandings of race as property in capitalism. Race emerges both as a concrete category and also as a unique but perpetual moment in the circulation of value.

In Marx's primary economic writings (Capital, 2008 and Grundrisse, 2003) race is largely absent from the discussion but to a greater extent so too are discussions of class as a direct concrete relation. Rather, class antagonisms are concrete manifestations (as discussed above) of the dialectic between labour and capital as material, yet abstract, forces. Postone's (1993) reinterpretation of Marx follows directly from this analysis and questions the perspective of some Marxists that the abstract categories considered by Marx (labour, capital, value) are transhistorical. Rather, the conventional categories of classical political economy (price, profit, rent, wage labour), are the surface categories of Marxist political economy (value, labour power, surplus value) which represent the social universe of capitalism. Postone's theoretical reinterpretation has been considered by Rikowski (2002) to have unsettled the emphasis of Marxism on surface categories of exploitation and concrete domination to reveal the abstract and insidious character of capitalism as a totalising universe of abstract domination. In many ways Postone's analysis of Marx's critical categories is focussed on the highest level of abstraction – his discussion of surplus value, exploitation and indeed class is therefore limited. However, for the purposes considered here it represents a fine starting point for the beginning of, if not a full elaboration, of a possible integration of Marxism and CRT. This is not just an academic distinction but has implications in terms of praxis in that the perspective of labour in capitalism is not the standpoint through which capitalism should be critiqued but rather the critique should be based upon the role of labour in capitalism and, for critical race theorists, additionally of whiteness in capitalism. To quote Postone 'Marxian critique is a critique in labour

in capitalism rather than merely a critique of labour's exploitation and mode of social distribution' (Postone, 1993, p. 124).

Postone considers that the commodity as an abstract formation ('the general form of the product *only* in capitalism', Postone, 1993, p. 128, my italics) represents the starting point for an analysis of labour in capitalism. The commodity is not to be understood simply as an object, or even a service (although it can appear to be such things) – 'The category commodity does not simply refer to an object, but to a historically specific "objective" form of social relations...a structuring and structural form of social practice that constitutes a radical new form of social interdependence' (Postone, 1993, p. 139). The commodity appears as a good, a use value and 'is a value' (Postone, 1993, p. 127). As a use value the commodity is the employment of concrete labour but '...as a value it is the objectification of abstract human labour' (Postone, 1993, p. 127) which is not biophysical but socially determined (Postone, 1993, p. 145). The exchange of commodities involves an abstraction from both the physical properties of products and (qualitative) differences in types of labour (Postone, 1993, p. 147). Problematically, the concept of the commodity presupposes both free wage labour and capital. According to Postone, in capitalism labour must be doubly free 'The precondition of such a mode is that labour is free in a double sense; workers must be the free proprietors of their own labour capacity and hence of their own persons: yet they *must be free of all objects needed to realize this labour power*' (Postone, 1993, p. 270, my italics). This implies that the sale of labour as a commodity needs to be unrestricted although as I will discuss below 'race' complicates this relation.

This analysis means that we must reconsider concrete relations between classes as being related to capital in the abstract:- '...class conflict is a driving force of historical development in capitalism only because it is structured by, and embedded in, the social forms of the commodity and capital' (Postone, 1993, p. 319). This social relation does not represent a separate sphere of human activity (e.g. as the market as opposed to civil society) but a totality, the universe of capital. Capital has its own dynamic, altering the very nature of time from concrete time (dependent on events such as the sun rising) to abstract time '...uniform, continuous, homogenous empty time (which is) independent of events' (Postone, 1993, p. 202) such as the hours on a clock. The scale of value is dependent upon socially necessary labour time that is '...the labour time required to produce any use-value under the prevailing socially normal conditions of production and with the prevalent socially average degree of skill and intensity of labour' (Postone, 1993, p. 190). As value is a function of socially necessary labour time an increase in productivity (that increases the number of commodities produced in a unit of time) reduces the socially necessary labour time required to produce a unit of that commodity and so reduces the value of that commodity (Postone, 1993, p. 193). This dialectic between value and time creates a treadmill effect whereby 'each new level of productivity once it has become socially generalised not only redetermines the social labour but, in turn, is redetermined by that hour as the 'base level' (Postone, 1993, p. 289). An increase in productivity momentarily increases the value which can be produced in a given period of time but as soon as that increase in productivity is generalised the value that can be produced in a particular unit of

time falls to the previous socially determined level. The working hour becomes denser in terms of the productivity of labour whilst simultaneously the value contained in each commodity falls. Rather than being a ‘thing’ open to rational direction, though, capital has its own dynamic. ‘Capital, then is not a thing, or fully grasped in terms of social relations, rather it is a category of movement, of expansion, it is a dynamic category, “value in motion”. This social form is alienated, quasi independent, exerts a mode of abstract compulsion and constraint on people and is in motion’ (Postone, 1993, p. 269) as self valorising value. This is an *abstract* form of social domination. At a lower level of abstraction, capitalists seek to increase profits (or more accurately surplus value) by increasing labour time expended (the length of the working day), reducing necessary labour time and increasing productivity.

Hence an increase in material wealth may be associated with a fall in value giving rise to the possibility of a new form of human existence (Communism) whilst paradoxically human labour remains necessary to production: ‘...capital unfolds historically in such a way that the level of productivity becomes less and less dependent on the direct labour of the workers’ (Postone, 1993, p. 296). This does not imply that the market form of exchange is the problem ‘...abolishing the market mode of co-ordination and value are not identical’ (Postone, 1993, p. 291). Within this analysis of Marx, Postone comments lightly on how this might lead to a reconstruction of Marxist analysis of race. For example, it might lead to a historical approach to ‘...which activities become recognised socially as labour’ (Postone, 1993, pp. 356 – 357). In terms of my analysis of race below it may also lead to an understanding of which activities can be recognised as capital. In particular the process by which race is recognised (as a racial project) and then becomes part of abstract racial domination under capitalism. However, Postone’s subsequent analysis of racism, although it makes use of concepts of abstract and concrete domination, is orientated around conceptions of ideology and false consciousness. As a case in point, Postone (2003) characterises anti-Semitism in Nazi Germany as being concerned with the National Socialists identifying Jewish people with the abstract character of capitalism whilst identifying Aryans with the concrete character of capitalism. Postone hence considers that racism occurs at the level of ideology in terms of an ideological split between groups considered to represent concrete and those considered to represent abstract racism. This is distinct from his earlier (1993) comments concerning a possibility for the conjoint analysis of ‘race’ and capitalism allowing an examination of ways in which certain categories become socially recognised as labour. One can take up this strand of Postone’s (1993) work in moving to consider how ‘race’ is fixed to bodies as capital through (violent) labour.

In *Capital* (2008) Marx considers that the expenditure of human labour power is obscured both in the process of commodity exchange and in the perceptual process. In the production of a ‘coat’ for example ‘...human labour power must have been actually expended. In this aspect the coat is a depository of value, but though worn to a thread, it does not let this fact show through’ (Marx, 2008, p. 26). This process is both ‘...perceptual and imperceptible by the senses. in the same way the light from an object is perceived by us not as the subjective excitation of the optic nerve,

but as the objective form of something outside the eye itself' (Marx, 2008, p. 43). If 'race' were a prosthetic and tradable commodity then it could be considered to have similar properties to the coat in Marx's arguments. That is, it would possess the potential for the realisation of exchange value (being the product of human labour) but it would appear to be a perceptual, rather than social, relation. Of course, race has never been traded as an actual prosthetic but in plantation slavery race became a relation that the labourer/enslaved Afrikan (Nehusi, 2004) carried home with him or her each day for the purposes of identification of that which is labour from that which is capital. In concrete terms, this relation could be considered to be part of constant capital ('...That part of capital which is represented by the means of production, by the raw material, auxiliary material, and the instruments of labour, does not in the process of production undergo any quantitative alteration of value. I therefore call it the constant part of capital, or more shortly *constant capital*' Marx, 2008, p. 139). Race operated as a commodity in plantation slavery in that labour (violent labour in this case) is required to fix it in place. Plantation slavery is a misnomer for what it really is being a form of capitalism as not only the 'instruments' (and Marx concedes that slaves are capital – see Marx, 2008, p. 164, p. 166) but the products of the plantation were produced for exchange in large scale production with division of labour and with the use of abstract time to measure the production of commodities (Smith, 1997). Slavery is a thoroughly capitalist mode of production but not from Marx's Eurocentric perspective and race as capital is built on and around a conscious and revolutionary human subject (Robinson, 2000). Marxists, however, often view plantation slavery through humanist/reformist eyes as morally repugnant and inimical to the imminent mode of capitalist production. The Eurocentric focus of Marx's work and Marxists moral, rather than political-economic, objections to slavery mean that the locus of capitalism was focussed on the factories of Europe rather than plantations ('The term factories was used to describe the West African staging areas gathering labouring bodies for the slave trade', Roediger, 2009, p. 60). Marx ultimately takes industrial production and manufacture as the specific example of capitalist production (1993, 2008).

Within slavery, the marking of bodies as raced is 'dead labour', congealed labour (e.g. capital or like traded human hair, a 'zombie commodity', Berry, 2008). However, it has the unusual property of *infinite extension* meaning where it is marked on a body (the 'branding process') it is extended to all other bodies where property rights are held over humans. This extends past slavery where whiteness becomes a legal form of property within capitalism. This infinite extension is unlike any other form of capital (in classical economic theory) where the formation of that form of capital does not produce non-capitals. Making a hammer for use in a factory does not build 'non-hammers' whereas racialising a body racialises all other bodies. Although this process is explicit in plantation slavery this 'branding' process extends itself to operate in all capitalist forms of production where race thereby becomes of possible use to the capitalist.

According to Marx 'Labour in a white skin cannot emancipate itself where it is branded in a black skin' (Marx, 1992, p. 414). Although 'branding' in this statement could easily refer to black labour in slavery I reinterpret it in terms of a

process of capitalisation of blackness / whiteness. Whiteness and blackness (or more properly the universe of racial domination which is more nuanced than these binary categories suggest) are mutually constitutive, one presupposes the other. Blackness as capital presupposes whiteness as capital hence in the 'branding' of labour as black other labour is branded not as black but as white. Moreover, this mutual constitution of race is a form of capital. The process of racial formation operates as a form of semantic nanotechnology where capitalising the skin of one body instantly capitalises all others. The branding of even one body as 'raced' races all other bodies. This branding process (the creation of race as a form of capital) requires the expenditure of human labour (such as punishments, intellectual labour, lynchings and rapes). It was and is achieved through force and violence (Mills, 2003, p. 184). Indeed, it involves the prolonged and continual expenditure, over generations, of congealed labour and force to maintain property rights in whiteness. Racism makes race rather than being its result. However, race is an unusual commodity in that its exchange value cannot be separated from the body and raced bodies hence operate as a 'tertium quid'. This term is applied from Du Bois' who states that behind liberal (contractual) conceptions of equality:-

...lurks the afterthought of force and dominion – the making of brown men to delve when the temptation of beads and red calico clogs. The second thought streaking from the death-ship and the curving river is the thought of the older South – the sincere and passionate belief that *somewhere between men and cattle*, God created a *tertium quid*, and called it a Negro – a clownish, simple creature, at times even loveable within its limitations, but strictly foredoomed to walk within the veil. To be sure *behind the thought lurks the afterthought* – some of them favouring chance might become men, but in sheer self defence we dare not let them, and we build about them walls so high, and hang between them and the light a veil so thick that they shall not even think of breaking through

(Du Bois, 1996, p. 74 – 75)

The tertium quid exists 'somewhere between men and cattle'. In capitalist production this is between labour and capital as the body contains both the capacity to labour and race as capital. I am using Du Bois metaphorically here but Marx is also inconsistent on the subject of slavery, sometimes treating enslaved Africans as capital and at other times as instances of unfree labour. However, Marxists concentrate extensively on the concept of 'free labour' as this enables them to make a clear demarcation between what is 'capital' and what is 'labour' in the concrete, but capital and labour are abstract categories in Marx's critical theory which only loosely map onto concrete (observable) social formations. Philosophically, it would be difficult in Marxist analysis to distinguish between the categories of human labourer, sentient robot and cyborg in terms of capital and labour. Animals, in capitalist production, are capital and robots (machinery) can also be considered capital whereas human labourers can be considered to be labour. Sentient robots, as much as they have a 'species being' (consciousness) can be considered to be labour. It is also possible that they can enter production as

capital. Cyborgs would certainly possess ‘species being’ and, again, there is a relation to capital. These examples of hybridity do not contradict Marx’s critical theory but rather they are concretisations of Marx’s abstract categories of capital and labour. Rather than considering cyborgian futures of humanity, however, the ‘tertium quid’ of plantation slavery, rather than industrial capital, becomes both the universal form and the first form of the ‘capitalisation of humanity’ (Rikowski, 2002). As ‘raced’ (capitalised) beings we have long ago reached Rikowski’s dystopia of becoming literally ‘human capital’.

Moreover, the process of capitalisation in slavery continues through capitalism with race operating as a form of ‘sham property’ a form of capital which the capitalist allows the labourer to maintain to reduce the costs of capitalist production. Sham capital is that which is not dispossessed from the labourer as the capitalist: - ‘...buys their labour and takes their property first in the form of the product, and soon after that the instrument as well, or he leaves it to them as sham property in order to reduce his own production costs’ (Marx, 2003, p. 510). White people therefore are the ‘small masters’ (Marx, 2008, p. 186) of this sham capital who seemingly ‘own’ their whiteness. In addition, whites receive an ontological wage which cannot be subsumed into categories of labour and is a qualitative rather than quantitative reward for their participation in a system of white supremacy. Note that although its character is qualitative the implications of this qualitative character can indeed be quantitative. Mills (2003, p. 167) considers Du Bois ‘psychological wage of whiteness’ to be ‘...”ontological”’, linked with personhood and arguably more profoundly “material” than the economic. If, as early emphasised, personhood is central to the emergence of the modern world, then the reality that has to be faced is that whiteness has historically been a prerequisite for full personhood, recognition as a human being’ (Mills, 2003, p. 167). From a Marxist perspective, the economic (capital as value in motion) is the material and so the habitation of minoritised people as ‘tertium quid’ is realised in terms of abstract racial domination. The status of tertium quid is one of ‘...ontological determination by race’ as capital (Birt, 1997, 208). People of colour, and whites, are valued for their ‘race’ as capital as well as their ability to sell labour as a commodity. ‘Race’ is thence used as a form of capital in ‘divide and rule’ strategies for the labour force and hence increasing the rate of exploitation.

CONCLUSION

In this chapter I have considered a critical framework based on ‘whiteness’ with which to analyse disaster education with regard to social justice. This framework goes beyond an analysis of whiteness as identity or privilege (although these are still important) but considers whiteness as a structural form of oppression. Its oppressive power depends partly upon the strategies of white individuals or groups. I have also considered whiteness to be a quasi-material form of subjugation. Firstly, part of white privilege is the supposed ‘prosthetic’ quality of whiteness, the ways in which individual whites believe that they can transcend individual white identity (and indeed collective racial identity). Prosthetic whiteness (movement beyond whiteness) for bodies requires other bodies (racialised ‘others’) to be fixed

in place. Secondly, the commodification of bodies as ‘raced’ has allowed ‘race’ to be used as a form of capital which is used in classed / raced forms of exploitation. These forms of whiteness as structural oppression will be used to frame the discussion of disaster education, in all of its forms, which follows.

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