Article

We'll see things they'll never see: Sociological reflections on race, neurodiversity and higher education

Chantelle Jessica Lewis
Pembroke College, University of Oxford, UK

Jason Arday
Faculty of Education, University of Cambridge, UK

Abstract

This article offers sociological reflections on race and neurodiversity in UK higher education (UKHE). Using dialogical knowledge production and collaborative autoethnography, the authors discuss their lived experiences of navigating the politics of neurodiversity and neurotypical hegemony in UKHE as Black sociologists. The central argument explores how race and neurotypical hegemony overexposes Black neurodiverse scholars to a particular and pervasive form of double jeopardy. The authors' reflexive accounts show how, as Black scholars, they must often negotiate the operation of race alongside the hegemonic practices of the white western academy. In this way, they grapple with racism and ableism in the context of value, meritocracy and elitism. The authors contend that drawing on the politics of neurodiversity in conjunction with Black subjectivities can generate routes into exposing and dismantling neurotypical hegemony. A key motive for discussing their own experiences as neurodivergent scholars in UKHE is that existing research and anecdotal reflections point to a pattern of general whitening of how we understand neurodiversity in academia. The authors indulge their personal, political and academic commitment to this subject as they contend that as Black neurodivergent sociologists, *we'll see things they'll never see.*

Keywords

Black studies, disability, hegemony, higher education, neurodiversity, race, value

Corresponding author:
Chantelle Jessica Lewis, The Oxford Research Centre in the Humanities, Pembroke College, University of Oxford, Oxford, OX1 1DW, UK.
Email: chantelle.lewis@pmb.ox.ac.uk

Introduction

The concept of neurodiversity was coined by an Australian sociology student, Judy Singer, in her 1996 dissertation – *Odd People In: The Birth of Community Amongst People on the 'Autistic Spectrum': A Personal Exploration of a New Social Movement based on Neurological Diversity.* Singer – herself autistic – began corresponding with the US writer Harvey Blume, who would later popularise the concept in a 1998 issue of *The Atlantic* (Blume, 1998). But finding little enthusiasm or support for her work on the 'politics of neurodiversity' in academia, Singer channelled her energies into advocacy work for autistic parents and children (Singer, 2022).

This early story of the fate of academic scholarship on neurodiversity shows how the social sciences routinely juxtapose a careful recognition of the plurality of marginalisation with the exclusion of certain scholars who are more likely to be at the sharper end of subordination (see Bhambra, 2014; Go, 2020). This historical and contemporary tendency in the sociology of inequalities in particular has played out in several ways, all of which strongly favour the scholarship of groups that have dominated the discipline. Sociology has provided the conceptual tools for neurodivergent students like Singer to generate a politics of neurodiversity, yet has failed to offer them an intellectual home in the university. While her experience illustrates the extent to which academia is ill-equipped to value the contributions of neurodiverse scholars, we go a step further here by emphasising the impact of negative racialisation and neurotypical hegemony when they operate in tandem. Put simply, if negative racialisation within the academy already marginalises the work of scholars of colour, there is even more at stake if scholars are both Black and neurodivergent.[1] Exclusionary traditions and cultures embedded in higher education and its systemised production of academic research and writing structurally marginalise a plethora of students and staff (Arday, 2022; Arday & Mirza, 2018). Our contribution therefore focuses on race and the politics of neurodiversity, in an attempt to demonstrate how deficit approaches in UK higher education (UKHE) perpetuate and reproduce neurotypical notions of academic excellence.

Written from a sociological perspective that uses a hybrid of Black feminism, cultural and disability studies, this article is a collaborative, retrospective and reflective discussion based on the experiences of two Black neurodivergent sociologists employed at different UK universities. Whilst the arguments here could apply to Black neurodivergent academics more generally, our methodological approach (collaborative autoethnography and dialogical production) has been developed through our sociological imagination(s) (Mills, 1959). Though our intervention is clearly interdisciplinary – and generates a holistic overview of disability in UKHE – we frame our reflections as primarily *disciplined* within sociologies of social justice. In this way, we routinely emphasise that the politics of neurodiversity should be understood within the racialised, classed and gendered structures of society. This will be particularly evident as we draw on the challenges of being Black neurodivergent scholars whose scholarship is focused on creative methods in relation to race, class and Black subjectivities (Arday, 2021; Lewis & Ofori-Addo, 2022–present; Lewis et al., 2017–2019; Lewis et al., 2019–2022; Mobeen et al., 2023). In our conversations – shaped by Black feminist thought, which intentionally connects theory to praxis – we engage reflexively with our own disciplinary training,

swinging between our own lived experiences of marginalisation and how we process these matters sociologically as neurodivergent scholars.

The complex interplay in the production of scholarship within the broad remit of sociologies of social justice, race and neurodiversity demonstrates that *the personal is the political and is the academic* (Erdmans, 2007). As sociologists, we need to pay attention to how professional and academic processes risk replicating the very structures we seek to expose and explore. For this reason, our discussions reveal the need for sociology, in particular, to take seriously the ways race and neurodiversity intensify structurally produced power dynamics in relation to knowledge production.

This is a theoretical contribution to the burgeoning body of Black scholarship in disability studies on the politics of neurodiversity and the varying social (and racial) reproductions that this continues to generate. We demonstrate how Black subjectivities, racism and ableism – already informed by the whitening of disability politics – are in fact facilitated by the racialisation of neurotypical hegemony (see later section).[2]

Crucially, our assertions grapple with our heightened sense of feeling, informed by the combination of neurodiversity, racism and ableism, which does not hinder our scholarly abilities, but rather demonstrates that as Black neurodivergent sociologists, *we'll see things they'll never see.*[3]

The politics of neurodiversity in UKHE

Although we are both now academics, we began our journeys as students. In this section, therefore, we offer a brief history and contemporary mapping of disability and the student experience as a foundation for our sociological reflections, which situates Black subjective engagement with the politics of neurodiversity and the racialisation of neurotypical hegemony.

The 1995 Disabilities Discrimination Act made it illegal for educational institutions to discriminate against disabled students, providing leaders and practitioners with a legal obligation to engage purposefully with the politics of 'reasonable adjustment' (Disabilities Discrimination Act, 1995; Madriaga et al., 2011; Pollak, 2009). These structural mechanisms for adjusting metrics for neurodivergent students have generated a more inclusive student experience and many practitioners, teachers, parents and charities have put pressure on institutions and governments, both to promote the inclusion of disabled students and to engage with their needs (for example, ADHD Babes, n.d.; National Autistic Society, n.d.; The Donaldson Trust, n.d.). Alongside this development, scholars of disability (for example, Pollak, 2009) have explored the cultural and structural shift in awareness, inclusivity and funding for neurodivergent students in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). Pollak states that this cultural turn has predominantly provided for the needs of dyslexic students (Borland & James, 1999). However, a combination of flexible study, better representation and a general move towards student support services has improved understanding of neurological difference across a broad spectrum, and with this the need to provide a variety of ways to learn.

The broad definition of reasonable adjustment requires practitioners to consider that a student's way of learning and communicating may be demonstrably impacted by their neurodivergent trait(s), which highlights the way that traditional measures of educational

success and achievement have systematically excluded neurodivergent students, and framed our ways of being, learning and engaging as marginal, inferior and in some instances as 'simply odd' (Pollak, 2009). Though there has clearly been some progress in the inclusion of disabled students, the motivation to create a *socially just* (Goodley, 2007) education system is clearly haunted by university cultures founded and grounded in racist, classist and ableist exclusions in the name of hierarchies of excellence and the inequitable systems that favour able-bodiedness and neurotypicality remain intact.

Madriaga et al. (2011, p. 907) argue that the politics of pedagogical marginalisation experienced by disabled students in particular has been nothing less than a continuous institutional endorsement of eugenics. The concentration on pedagogies that prioritise the experience of non-disabled students has reproduced a culture of normalcy embedded in an everyday eugenics that sees 'defects' or 'impairments' as the antithesis of the ideal student (p. 902). Extensive quantitative and qualitative sociological research on disabled students and inclusivity (Giroux, 2003; Goodley, 2007; Madriaga, 2007; Runswick-Cole, 2014) has stressed that embedded negative attitudes towards neurological difference now require critical pedagogies that value a socially just framework and reject normative ideations of academic excellence. Inspired by Goodley's (2007) notion of 'socially just pedagogies', we reflect here on our experiences as Black neurodivergent sociologists – a purposive statement of our civic obligation to value all students and staff.

There is also the issue of the university space and the politics of neurodiversity becoming a potential proxy for neoliberal policy agendas in teaching, learning and research. On the subject of autism advocacy, neoliberalism and commodification, Runswick-Cole states that 'autism [becomes] bought and sold in the marketplace of academia in courses, conferences, research centres and published research' (Runswick-Cole, 2014, p. 1125). Further, Mallett and Runswick-Cole (2012) stress that there are limitations, and at times dangers, in a politics of neurodiversity that operates alongside the politics of representation within the confines of the neoliberal university. Runswick-Cole is clear that in neoliberal times, the politics of neurodiversity, and more specifically of autism advocacy, is often at risk of perpetuating normative iterations of sameness and difference. This in turn reproduces a discourse of the valued subject (see later section). Drawing attention to (and at times individualising) neurodivergent people risks creating a culture where those deemed different are beyond reproach ('blame the brain') (Runswick-Cole, 2014, p. 1123), whilst also producing discourses that commodify neurological difference through a focus on (our) 'extraordinary capabilities' (Jefferies & Ahmed, 2022, p. 637). Such capabilities function as a distraction from the need to thoroughly interrogate the omnipresence of neurotypical hegemony in society.

Our analysis in this article transcends, as well as building on, ideas of inclusion and the student experience to consider how feasible it is for socially just frameworks to be applied at the level of teaching and research for academic staff. Put simply, the teachers who are structurally susceptible to reproducing 'the pervasiveness of normalcy' (Madriaga et al., 2011, p. 902) in academia are our peers, reviewers, colleagues and managers. Are the people around us ready to dismantle the socially and academically endorsed synergies between neurotypical hegemony, academic excellence and the workings of race? In the next section we explain how we are attending to the politics of

neurodiversity through a theoretical engagement with the social reproduction of neurotypical hegemony in civil society.

Racialisation of neurotypical hegemony: Civil society, consent and Black subjectivity

The social reproduction of race and ableism through a combination of different forms of physical, mental and neurological (dis)ability is being increasingly exposed and critiqued by Black disability scholars who bring together these multifaced issues. While disability scholars have theoretically and practically outlined the hegemonic and normative dominance of ableism, Black studies scholars have asserted that the intricate marginalisation of Black life relies on the social functioning of anti-Blackness. Therí Pickens (2019) attempts to unite Black studies with disability studies by addressing the co-production of (white) racism and ableism. Though our empirical reflections do not utilise Pickens' lens of Black madness as a disruption to enlightenment-driven rationality, our approach is influenced by her emphasis on a dialogical engagement with the sociologically informed disciplines of Black studies and disability studies (Pickens, 2019). Echoing the arguments of the critical disabilities scholar and autistic sociologist Radulski about neurotypical hegemony, our theoretical formulation proposes that it is particularly pervasive as a result of the operationalising of consent in civil society simultaneously with the workings of race (Hall et al., 1978). In this way, our theorisation of the racialisation of neurotypical hegemony relies on two key structural processes that generate double jeopardy for the Black neurodivergent (Fierros & Conroy, 2002). Firstly, our emphasis on hegemony when attending to the social processes in which neurotypicality is pervasive draws on the scholarship of both Gramsci (1971) and Hall (1986), in that it is (socially) produced within civil society. Civil society is maintained by the ways in which key social institutions (media, education and religion) become integral to the formation of people's identities, which ultimately contribute to the conditioning of ideological power that regulates ideas, values and social norms. Hegemony negates the need for coercive control in civil society; it merely requires ongoing investment in the protection and reproduction of ideologies that preserve power. Crucially, hegemony devises the most socially sanctioned (neurotypical) position in civil society with the consent of those who accomplish, as well as those who are denied, this most-tolerated status (Hall, 1986) (see section on 'Being neurodivergent in the academy' below). A vital component of neurotypical hegemony is also the way racialised boundaries of neurology (or eugenics) have both historically and in the present generated an active struggle to establish racisms and negative racialisation as normative and common sense.

The collision of neurotypical hegemony with race drives social processes that generate hegemonic cultures, so that civil society routinely consents to normative iterations of disability and neurodiversity. In this way, Leonardo and Broderick (2011) suggest, the intersection of racism and ableism requires an engagement with whiteness and disability as well as race, to show how racial hierarchies are sustained by the uncontested marking of white people as either smart (abled) or requiring more care (disabled). The ways in which these processes become normative initiate the racialisation of neurotypical

hegemony. Neurotypical hegemony is a multi-racialised issue that also marginalises white neurodivergents, although it is heightened for negatively racialised people by the way race functions to dehumanise, thus generating double jeopardy.

Sociology's exclusion of Black thought

In the production of sociological knowledge, as well as the professional cultures that make 'the sociologist', the existing racialised exclusion of Black intellectual thought must be considered alongside the politics of neurodiversity and neurotypical hegemony. Historically, the whitening of sociological knowledge has been (and remains), coupled to and fuelled by the subordination of Black scholarship (Arday et al., 2021). To illustrate some of the ways that the pioneers of Black scholarship were intellectually ostracised, we need look no further than its founding father – W. E. B. Du Bois – whose work was routinely overlooked and omitted by (white) sociologists (Bhambra & Holmwood, 2021). Even the rich history of Black feminist praxis and theory has frequently been positioned as marginal – specifically by a general lack of citation (Smith, 2018). The ongoing struggle for value and recognition for Black scholars is a fight for physical as well as intellectual inclusion in the paid scholarly workforce. But the more generalised exclusion of Black scholars from sociology demonstrates that being both Black and neurodivergent requires multiple engagements with critique that has not only already positioned our expertise as marginal, but which also considers our ways of thinking, doing and communicating scholarship to be inferior.

Research on the sociology of race, education and disability has begun to address the particularities of our experiences as Black neurodivergent sociologists in UKHE (Coard, 1971; Leonardo & Broderick, 2011). Cultures of institutionalised education in the UK provide the context for a discussion about race and neurodiversity in the academic workplace (in schools as well as higher education) that maps our trajectories as Black schoolchildren, university students and academic staff – showing how the system has overexposed us (as well as many before and after) to the sharper inequities of the operation of race and class, an experience intensified by being neurodivergent (Blanchett, 2006). As we outline later, being Black sociologists with multiple neurodivergent traits who have embarked on schooling, study and work in a highly neurotypical discipline and education system has paved the way for what Fierros and Conroy (2002) call 'double jeopardy' in our adult lives, where we have each had to negotiate everyday a toxic fusion of racism and neurotypical hegemony.

Black feminist methodologies: Dialogical knowledge production and collaborative autoethnography

Much of our discussion below is framed by the Black feminist tradition of dialogue, openness and critique. Extending the range of contributions understood as acceptably scholarly is often misconstrued as a dilution of knowledge production, whereas we are – by contrast – interested in enhancing our projects by including different ways of knowing and sharing. The rigour, critique and evaluative frameworks for understanding the social world that come from our academic training remain at the centre of our request for

a more inclusive scholarly space for neurodivergent people. To go beyond traditional ways – or neurotypical ways – of teaching and researching should not be seen as a betrayal of intellectualism but as a defence of intellectual fluidity. As bell hooks notes:

> Our solidarity must be affirmed by shared belief in a spirit of intellectual openness that celebrates diversity, welcomes dissent, and rejoices in collective dedication to truth. (hooks, 2006, p. 33)

Though hooks was not explicitly referring to Black neurodivergent sociologists, the guiding principle of this quote is value and respect for the fluidity of intellectualism. Her illustration of intellectual openness is one that is always already engaged with by scholars and practitioners dedicated to resisting some of the exclusionary and limiting ways of communicating knowledge that we stress can be unwelcoming to neurodiverse scholars. Though these creative practices have always existed, neurodivergent forms of knowledge production have not been given the same kudos as knowledge produced within the parameters of neurotypical sociological thought. Furthermore, these processes are embedded in existing exclusionary cycles that are also racialised.

Our collective reflections on negotiating race and neurodiversity began when we met in 2018. In 2022, we began collating and recording our discussions, which form the basis of the empirical sections below. These conversations are grounded in our friendship, as well as in our experience of producing research and interventions together. Lewis is a Black and white mixed-race woman with Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder (ADHD), dyspraxia and dyslexia. Arday is a Black man with a form of hybrid autism, Asperger's syndrome[4] and global developmental delay, and is also dyslexic. Both authors are employed as academics in UKHE.

A key motive for discussing our own experiences as neurodivergent sociologists is that existing research and anecdotal reflections point to a pattern of general whitening of how we understand neurodiversity in academia more broadly (Leonardo & Broderick, 2011). Of course, white, or non-Black neurodivergent sociologists must also contend with the eugenic normalcy associated with academic excellence, but within this there are clearly stratifications conditioned by a structurally sponsored hierarchy that is both racialised and classed. This matters for whose voices are prioritised when it comes to critical reflections about neurotypical hegemony in scholarship. Thus, we assert that even when discussing the inequity in education experienced by all neurodivergent people, the sector still prioritises whiteness (Leonardo & Broderick, 2011). The multifaceted politics of neurodiversity demonstrates how race and disability become silenced by whiteness (Lentin, 2020). Put simply, we assert that the racialised hierarchy of disability has marginalised Black neurodivergents through discourses that centre myths about intelligence, deviance and meritocracy. We have attempted to resist these processes by using our Black and neurodivergent voices as the basis of our methodological approach.

Black feminist methodologies and praxis provide useful dialogical tools with which to examine sociology's readiness to embrace Blackness and neurodivergence together. Our lived experiences and troubles are both personal and political; at their core is a desire for these sociological reflections about race, neurodiversity and the academy to be incorporated into strategies for social research and knowledge production (Combahee River

Collective, 1977/2015; Parnell-Berry & Michel, 2020). This should not be misinterpreted. It is not about focusing exclusively on the individualised plight of the Black neurodivergent academic, but more about showing how our own experiences can contribute to a structurally focused analysis of the way neurotypical-ness becomes institutionally synonymous with academic excellence. For us, and for others like us who find it exceptionally challenging to feel grounded in an (academic) intellectual home, we stress that reckoning with the structural and social forces in academia that overindulge neurotypical ways of doing and being scholars, requires a centring of the voices of those routinely excluded from these processes. We see our exclusion as functioning to serve the elitist nature of our disciplines – even among people who research, and claim to be concerned with how marginality is reproduced.

For our intervention on neurodiversity and the academy, we firstly employ the Black feminist tradition of exploring how our lived experiences of the social world help us formulate and respond to complex issues of marginalisation by utilising Patricia Hill Collins' (2012) *dialogical knowledge production.* This is grounded in C. Wright Mills' sociological imagination, which incorporates the social world, history and biography in conversation (Mills, 1959). Collins addresses the need for an *engaged* scholarship of theory, praxis and dialogue (Collins, 2012, p. 14), which we interpret in practice by centring extracts and analysis from our recorded conversations and WhatsApp voice notes containing our memories of our experiences as both students and staff (Lewis, 2020). We focus primarily on the ways that the racialisation of neurotypical hegemony has intersected with our position as Black sociologists in UKHE. Our reflections are the result of a friendship founded on the academic work we have undertaken together (Leading Routes, n.d.; Williams et al., 2019), to learn and build from that which we are able to vocalise together.

In addition to incorporating the possibilities of dialogical knowledge production in our discussion of race and neurodiversity in UKHE as an example of the plurality of marginalisation across the academy, we have also partly engaged with autoethnographic methods. We draw on existing research that centres interpretive, critical and personal interventions in social life to explore how the interpersonal interacts with marginalising structures in society (Boylorn & Orbe, 2014; Denzin, 2014). In this way, dialogical and autoethnographic methods not only allowed us to reflect on how we act and feel in society, but also presented opportunities to develop layers of consciousness that focused on how we come to *know and be* in the world (Adams et al., 2013; Brown-Vincent, 2019). While the example of autoethnographers like Toyosaki (2018), who drew on his own experience of racism in a predominantly white university, showed how we could contribute to dialogues about the emotional toll of inequity, the method also offered space for us to become *storytellers of hope*. In this respect, Holman Jones contends that the approaches embedded in autoethnography allow us to show how *we survived and are surviving* the complex structures that stratify our existence (Holman Jones et al., 2013). Although the crux of our analysis here is intended to offer some critical interventions on whether sociology is ready to embrace neurodiversity, we must also include and reconcile the fact of our employment as scholars. Dialogical knowledge production, coupled with the autoethnographic approach, allows our memories and reflections to provide a starting point for richer descriptions and insights into how neurotypical hegemony and race affect what it

means to be a scholar. Our discussions therefore centre some of the ways the institutional cultures and structures of the neurotypical academy have impacted our trajectories as Black neurodivergent sociologists. Our empirical focus on our own experiences will enable many other neurodiverse staff and students (who will have similar experiences of the stagnant nature of neurotypical ways of producing knowledge) to relate to much of what we have to say. Above all, our ambition is to contribute to scholarship that demonstrates the value of incorporating singular anecdotal reflections, alongside 'detailing, describing and analysing multiple narratives' (Arday, 2019, p. 149) in relation to how race and neurodiversity intersect in UKHE.

Being neurodivergent in the academy

Adaptation: Masking and camouflaging

Being neurodivergent requires constant negotiation with the hegemonic and cultural domination of a neurotypical society (Belek, 2022). For autistic individuals, it is commonly held that navigating social life is achieved through a combination of 'masking' and 'camouflaging' (Miller et al., 2021; Sasson et al., 2017). Radulski (2022) notes that camouflaging involves presenting outwardly as 'non-autistic', while masking is the internal process of noticing autistic traits in oneself and acting to conceal them (Radulski, 2022, p. 2). Crucially, this concealment of autistic traits for the benefit of non-autistic people has been linked with stress, mental illness and suicidality (Cage & Troxell-Whitman, 2019; Radulski, 2022). Although only one of us is autistic, the process and consequences of camouflaging and masking was one fundamental aspect of our dialogue. Indeed, both authors narrated that 'adaptation', or outwardly working towards being perceived as scholarly, prevented them from being their authentic selves in the workplace:

> My biggest issue in academia is having to hide my autism. Turning up to work and hiding my autism. For example, 90% of the time I don't know what is going on but I am having to pretend I know what is going on. And I don't understand what people are saying. So because of the processing delay it takes me ages to understand. But normally I understand about two days after the meeting and the context is gone. What restricts me professionally speaking is that I just can't be myself. (Arday)

Here, Arday recalls how challenging it is to understand the way people communicate at work. Because it may take him several days to process and understand what is being asked of him in a particular conversation – to camouflage, mask and finally to comprehend – he cannot simply *be himself* at work. As Bagatell (2007) notes, for autistic individuals – and others with neurodivergent traits – identity construction occurs through processes of socialisation inscribed by the institutions we have to engage with. Arday's description of the challenges of camouflaging and masking, which are intrinsic to his ongoing feelings of disjuncture at work, are summed up in Bagatell's account of the difficulties faced by autistic people: 'constructing identities [is therefore] . . . a process that requires ingenuity, creativity and *much hard work*' (Bagatell, 2007, p. 414).

If I think about the workplace, as in the academy, it's kind of just spoken about in a way which ignores it. I don't necessarily need extra support but I do need space to be different. (Lewis)

There is nothing inbuilt within our everyday work life as neurodivergent academics that considers how our processing, understanding, working at desired paces is difficult . . . there is rarely modification for us. (Arday)

Keeping in mind Bagatell's note on how adapting the self is intrinsic to the everyday lives and identity construction of neurodivergent individuals, the authors' reflections on the lack of space and absence of modifications for their neurodiversity in the workplace are poignant. In spite of substantial progress in inclusive teaching and learning (Pollak, 2009), there continues to be a disconnect between the student environment and the academy with which neurodivergent staff are faced. When we re-listened to our conversations about the impact on our senses of self of navigating the neurotypical hegemony that dominates most of our social interactions in the workplace, we were struck by how little consideration is given to our differing needs as employees, in spite of it being professionally known among our peers, colleagues and superiors that we have multiple neurodivergent traits. This is not to negate the very real ways in which designated departments and teams within the university have generated more inclusive cultures for neurodivergent individuals, but simply to contend that many everyday procedures in academic life (writing, teaching and researching, conversation, reviewing, being reviewed and collaborating) continue to be shaped by neurotypical hegemony.

Racialisation of adaptation and double jeopardy

Black academics in UK institutions are hampered by structural and interpersonal processes of anti-Blackness that expose us to systematic exclusion and co-option, while presenting superficially inclusive policies that tokenise our scholarly endeavours as homogeneous and inferior (Johnson et al., 2018). Black participation in academic scholarship often relies on personal and professional concessions that deplete our mental health (Wallace et al., 2016), can make us more likely to be precariously employed (Arday, 2021; Rollock, 2021) and routinely require ongoing negotiation with racist micro-aggressions that contribute to producing environments that thwart our career progression (Arday, 2022; Pilkington, 2013; Shilliam, 2014). The Black scholar Ellis Walker (2022) has gone as far as generating an ongoing Twitter thread to ensure there is a live record of the locations of Black academics in the UK and their areas of research. Below, as we reflect on our attempts to navigate higher education as Black neurodivergent sociologists, we take into account the overall situation of Black academics, which helps show how the various processes of adaptation to neurotypical hegemony interact with race; or rather, what our collective reflections tell us about the politics of neurodiversity.

When we listened back to the sections of our transcripts focused on the everyday and mundane aspects of being academic staff (meetings on- and off-line, answering emails, writing, researching, teaching and conversations with students and colleagues) we were instantly aware of how our position as employed sociologists interacted with race. We

turn next to the omnipresence of race and the way that the challenge of camouflaging our neurodiversity (to adapt to a neurotypical environment) is continually racialised.

> *Not being able to be myself and being Black can sometimes be exhausting. I wouldn't say they are mutually exclusive, but sometimes it feels like my Blackness and autism make things feel impossible.* (Arday)

A predominantly white, Eurocentric and highly neurotypical sector engenders rigid cultures that define *what and who* is considered scholarly. Reconsidering Arday's comment on the connection between race and neurodiversity made space for a cathartic discussion of an intrinsic aspect of our day-to-day lives – the racialisation of our ways of doing, being and becoming sociologists. In our methodological process of dialogical knowledge production, and heeding Black feminist scholarship attentive to the connection between theory and praxis, we collectively considered how existing literature on race, and whiteness in particular, could help us to interpret and unravel how our own neurodiversity and that of many other Black scholars becomes negatively racialised. These reflections were also inspired by Radulski (2022), who highlights the connections between race, neurodiversity and whiteness as an opportunity for those engaged in disability studies to take seriously the intersectional nature of adapting to neurotypical hegemony (see also Crenshaw, 1991). For example, in a critical discourse analysis of the activist social media campaign #Takethemaskoff, Radulski analysed 58 tweets that used this hashtag by 44 self-identified neurominority individuals, to explore the social drivers and consequences of masking and camouflaging in everyday life. She highlighted one tweet from a self-identifying Black and autistic individual who was continuously perplexed by the infractions of whiteness and neurotypical hegemony, whilst also struggling to be accepted by 'my peers and my people' (Radulski, 2022, p. 10). Similarly, Arday is clear about how the racialisation of his autism transcends whiteness:

> *If we take the concept of code-switching for Black people and then put in addition to that our previous points about masking . . . it's all so difficult. Performing the version of Blackness they want us to do – and this comes from everyone and not just white people. And then we actually have to make sure we understand what is happening. It's a daily minefield. And the key thing here is the time and energy it takes us. Race and neurodiversity together is exhausting.* (Arday)

Arday adds code-switching to the adaptations some Black neurodivergent people negotiate in the context of neurotypical hegemony in academia. Code-switching refers to the ways that Black people moderate their cultural and dialectical behaviours and mannerisms to fit the expectations of the dominant (white) majority (Myers, 2020; Seymour & Seymour, 1979). This process of performing racialised dialects while adapting to neurotypical hegemony as Black neurodivergent sociologists sharply resembles Franz Fanon's (1986) description of the process and impact of constructing a Black self in relation to the dominance of whiteness. In *Black Skins, White Masks*, Fanon outlined how the process of understanding oneself in relation to whiteness is about identifying how the white gaze positions Blackness through representations of racialised subjugation and inferiority. Using the notion of a 'racial epidermal schema', Fanon stated that the white

imagination of Blackness was shaped by 'a thousand details, anecdotes and stories' (Fanon, 1986, p. 84). These connections and examples of a form of 'double consciousness', as critically conceptualised by W. E. B Du Bois (1903/1961) and later Gilroy (2001), Yancy (2017) and Joseph-Salisbury (2018), demonstrate how Black people can become acutely aware of how they are being racialised in relation to whiteness.

We are reluctant to add neurodiversity to race scholarship here as simply a third strand of analysis. Social concepts, labels and constructions are seldom complete, and it would do a disservice to the capacity for race to adapt and change, as well as endorsing restrictive definitions of the spectrum of neurodiversity to suggest that Black neurodivergent individuals negotiate a 'tripled consciousness'. Instead, we argue that the process of performing and adhering to the white gaze through our double consciousness is intensified by neurodiversity. As Fierros and Conroy (2002) note, Black people with disabilities experience double jeopardy and are more likely to be restricted, segregated and marginalised.

Considering the very specific terrain of race, neurodiversity and sociology (and the academy), our reflections about our (Black) sense of self relate to an ongoing negotiation with the homogenisation and tokenisation of Blackness (in spite of our inherent heterogeneity as Black diasporians) while simultaneously reckoning with a lack of structural and interpersonal modification that takes account of our neurodiversity.

The personal violations caused by performing double consciousness are deepened by racism and ableism. In this way, we suggest, there are ongoing social, personal and professional consequences of race and neurotypical hegemony, through which our Blackness and neurodivergence expose us to an ongoing negotiation with the prospect of double jeopardy. Put simply, in the academic arena we must negotiate racialisation and neurotypical hegemony, both of which have an impact on the construction of the ideal scholar.

The academy celebrates white neurodivergent people very differently. And in a very visible way. There are definitely a lot more neurodiverse Black academics than we realise but I don't think we are given the same space to be authentic because we are already on the front line battling racism and all its professional manifestations in the workplace. (Lewis)

People who label autism or neurodiversity do it through a very white lens. I do genuinely feel like there is more space to talk and be accepting of white people with autism than Black people. (Arday)

The quotations above begin to position how neurodiversity and the idea of academic *value, or excellence*, is both racialised and, crucially, whitened. As Lorde (1984/2019) argues, whiteness exists to assign race to others, functioning to dominate, subjugate and present itself in mythical form (1984/2019, p. 116). Relatedly, Leonardo and Broderick (2011) note that presenting disability through a normative (white) lens means that those racialised as white and (dis)abled are more likely to be given the space, care and support they need in educational institutions.

Our reflective dialogue was often a collaborative effort to examine the racialisation of neurotypical hegemony, the dominance of whiteness and how neurodivergence in general is marginalised in academia. Disability and neurodivergence generate racialised

hierarchies of subordination, but both authors also recognised that this messy and complicated work of naming whiteness in particular becomes even more challenging while neurodivergent scholars racialised as white are also navigating neurotypical hegemony. That Black people have historically and consistently been presented as educationally subnormal means that conversations about neurological difference continue to risk perpetuating the idea of racial inferiority. Thus, we contend that double jeopardy, or the synergy between race and neurodivergence, is a neglected topic of enquiry.

Value: Elitism, meritocracy and academic excellence

Peer review

While we have explored the perversions of both neurotypical hegemony and the racialisation of neurodivergence, the combination of both neurological and racialised exclusion clearly highlights what is even now positioned as *valuable* scholarship. In this way, our discussion so far is responsive to Skeggs' (2014) note that the ubiquity of value in social life shrinks our sociological imagination, and though value is 'primarily monetized', 'values . . . are moral, cultural, qualitative and difficult to measure' (Skeggs, 2014, p. 3). Skeggs contends that the historical structuring of race, gender and class that assign value to people and their projects reproduces ideas about 'What is proper? what is the proper thing to do? Who is the proper person to do it?' (p. 13). Further, the value assigned to neurotypical hegemony in UKHE is built on a history of racialised, classed and ableist notions of academic excellence (Madriaga et al., 2011). The false equivalence between academic excellence and value has been stressed by scholars of mental disability, like Price (2011), as situated in the academy's pervasive and cultural conjoining of 'able-mindedness' with rationality. What is considered 'proper' academic scholarship, or *who* is considered scholarly, is socially reproduced through institutional cultures (knowledge production and collegiality) that prioritise narrow framings of academic excellence as normative, ordinary and of course, of greatest value:

> *Something I think is really interesting is what we value in academia. Thinking about metrics, thinking about citation. And thinking about citation and peer review. One thing that neurodivergent people experience – especially people with autism and ADHD – we have a heightened sense of feeling. This isn't that we can't handle getting reviewed or getting critiqued. It is an important part of our job to be reviewed, but this experience is so much more intense if you are neurodivergent. People will just say oh you are being fragile or sensitive and I am like, no, I literally have a different brain to you. I feel things in a much different way.* (Lewis)

Here, Lewis explores the connection between value, peer review and emotional deregulation. Emotional deregulation can be a prevalent feature of ADHD, impeding an individual's capacity to 'select, attend to, and appraise emotionally arousing stimuli' (Shaw et al., 2014, p. 276). But while critique and peer review remain essential components of knowledge production, this is embedded in cultures that favour neurotypical hegemony. Lewis continued:

I think sometimes the language use and lack of camaraderie in the reviewing process is a very neurotypical way of engaging in critique. Neurodivergent people are not fragile but we feel these reviews in different ways and process them differently. It's like we need a complete revisit of the reviewing process. Not to make it easier, but to make the process more accustomed to neurodivergence. This could relate to care, timings, communication, delivery – ultimately things that would improve the experience for everyone. (Lewis)

We emphasised above that our focus on the impact of neurotypical hegemony on neurodivergent individuals is concerned with intellectual fluidity rather than an engagement with anti-intellectualism. Both authors' narratives of the pursuit of academic credibility (including the production of peer-reviewed scholarship) emphasised the challenge of mitigating certain neurodivergent sensitivities. As Black sociologists, these sensitivities are not about our personal feelings, but relate to the complex interplay of racism, ableism and the production of scholarship on matters related to social justice, of which we have lived experience.

Further, Lewis's recommendations need to be considered in the context of the neoliberal university where funding, job security and the time allocated to produce scholarship have become intrinsically tied to the narrow framings of research impact (REF)[5] and teaching standards (TEF).[6] While the marketised and neoliberal terrain of UKHE has become saturated with insecurity, individualism and uncertainty (Davies, 2000), sociologists such as Billig (2013) point out that the auditing of the university has become a 'a culture of boasting' (2013, p. 24). Unprofessional peer review can be a cruel process of unsubstantiated critique, and scientists such as Silbiger and Stubler (2019) report that these cultures disproportionately harm the career progression of underrepresented groups in academia. Both authors felt that the way neurological difference and race are both represented and excluded intensifies these matters for Black neurodivergent scholars. As Arday put it:

The people govern the subjects. It's the people who create the subjects and disciplines. And quite frankly it is these people in general who are not empathetic of neurodiversity. If you do not pass their academic standards, you are disposable. And look, the nature of elitism in the academy doesn't give neurotypical people much margin of error but clearly it's going to give Black neurodivergents even less. It's like you would need every academic and every editorial board to make sure they were completely cognisant of the modifications needed for neurodivergence. And to be honest, the same premise could be used for racism. It comes back to our earlier points about Blackness and neurodivergence. We aren't adequately represented on editorial boards and then the processes within publishing are not considerate of how our brains work differently. It is a lot to manage. (Arday)

Arday succinctly connects the varying exclusions faced by Black neurodiverse scholars to knowledge production, noting the lack of collegial empathy among the scholarly community for the different ways in which neurodivergent brains function, especially when these are exacerbated by the need to negotiate with racism.

The failure to value Black scholarship in UKHE

It comes back to value. We know Black scholarship is consistently marginalised and we know neurodivergence further complicates this for us as Black academics. (Lewis)

The sporadic and tokenised value assigned to Black scholarship in UKHE remains inadequate. Further, the systemic processes of exclusion are particularly pertinent within sociology – a discipline grounded in the interrogation of the structures that produce the social reproduction(s) of society. Our reflections as Black sociologists are informed by the times in which we write, where we see little reason for these exclusions to remain intact. Put simply, sociologists should know better and should be recognising the various professional and scholarly processes that reproduce specific inequities for Black scholars. In the same way that unequal access and student success for Black students permeates the entire academic pipeline (Leading Routes, n.d), the few Black academic staff who acquire academic positions of prestige and authority in UKHE are a challenge for the sector as a whole. The scholarly positions we are referring to here pay attention to publishing record, research grants, inclusion on editorial boards and senior leadership positions in return for security of employment (Arday, 2022). Sociologists of education contend that to truly rupture the inequity experienced by Black students and staff in the university requires cultural, structural and interpersonal engagement with policies that centre social justice frameworks (Bhopal, 2022). For this reason, the relationship between institutional racism and neurotypical hegemony was a constant point of contention for both authors. Our penultimate point of discussion relates to how the myth of meritocracy and what and who is considered of value create a culture in which elitism and neurotypical hegemony become synonymous.

Following themes already discussed above, both authors were concerned about the racialisation of what is considered to be *valuable* scholarly endeavour, alongside racism and ablism.

> *The myth of meritocracy and elitism are the enemy of neurodiversity. We work in these elitist structures that frame excellence in a very specific way which isn't very neurodivergent friendly. You gotta think some neurodivergent people have been beaten by elitism before they've even gotten to university. Think about this if you are Black too.* (Arday)

Arday poignantly expresses a neurodivergent scholar's daily negotiation with neurotypical hegemony and normative modes of *doing scholarship*. Modes of knowledge production, social interaction and teaching methods favour students and staff who have had a more linear engagement with education institutions (Arday, 2019). Being *beaten down* by framings of academic excellence that reward measures of achievement that centre neurotypicality is only intensified by negative racialisation. Just as Lorde (1984/2019) contends that whiteness presents in a mythical form to stratify social life, we stress that the discursive relationship between meritocracy, value and academic excellence, and its capacity to present as normative, ordinary and virtuous is incredibly challenging, especially for Black neurodivergent scholars.

For Black, neurodivergent academic staff, notions of academic excellence set by elitist and meritocratic principles become a two-fold challenge. First, the systematic exclusion of both neurotypical and neurodivergent Black scholars and their scholarship in UKHE is intrinsically linked to what has historically been seen as valuable in academia. Secondly, Black neurodivergent scholars experience double jeopardy. And while in many ways these discussions transcend the workings of race, racism and UKHE's inability to

provide linear academic career progression for Black scholars will continue to negatively affect a mode of knowledge production inclusive of neurodiversity. For Black neurodivergent scholars to be seen, received and understood as heterogeneous scholars against the backdrop of the combined history of structured eugenics and racism is where the challenge lies.

'We are the exceptions, not the rule': On embracing neurodiversity

The premise of this article evolved from our dialogue about managing and negotiating the politics of neurodiversity as Black sociologists in UKHE. By situating our lived experiences in the context of existing structures that favour neurotypical hegemony, our critical reflections have been attentive to our everyday lives as Black neurodivergent sociologists, asking *how do/did we get through it?* Here, we turn to Back's reminder of the continued significance of everyday life, or how, 'it makes us take the mundane seriously and ask what is at stake in our daily encounters with neighbours or the people we brush past at the bus stop. It also means we have to think about the wider spectrum of life experiences from the despair and social damage to the ordinary triumphs of getting by' (2015, p. 821). Everyday life as Black neurodiverse scholars is about adapting, but has also meant becoming more dynamic, creative and innovative in our scholarship (see Arday, 2019; Lewis et al., 2017–2019; Williams et al., 2019). So, finally, we focus on some of the ways we have responded to the racialisation of neurotypical hegemony by developing our voices, or scholarship that goes beyond the narrow confines of academic excellence. We now contend that in spite of our contentions about how race and neurodiversity interact, our sociological pursuits overall have been enhanced by our neurodivergence. We see our scholarship as responsive to Mills' (1959) sociological imagination, but also as an example of public sociology (Burawoy, 2005):

> *I do think that neurodivergent people prove time and time again to have differing perspectives that come through the backdoor rather than the front. I think some of our strengths lie in our ability to communicate about society in creative ways.* (Lewis)

It is Lewis's emphasis here on differing perspectives and creativity which is of importance for the future of embracing all neurodivergent scholars. Arday followed the above with this statement about both authors' career trajectories:

> *I think for you and I, through work, connections and luck we have managed to carve out some spaces for our neurodiversity to flourish within the academy – but I do not think this is the norm. If we look over the past five years for us professionally, we have been able to work in ways that subvert the elitist norms of the academy and the best example of this is definitely [the podcast] Surviving Society.* (Arday)

Both authors are clear that despite earlier contentions on the perils of neurotypical hegemony, the fact that they have flourished in academia has been the exception rather than the rule. Arday then signals the importance of the ability to subvert elitist norms,

and points to the success of a project co-created by Lewis (2020). Both authors are part of a broad coalition of educators who contribute to the long tradition of Black and anti-racist education movements and initiatives in Britain (Leading Routes, n.d.; The Runnymede Trust, n.d.; The Ubele Initiative, n.d.) that have democratised knowledge and styles of teaching and learning that resist hierarchy, boundaries and elitism:

> *Does Surviving Society provide you a vehicle to be yourself as a sociologist?* (Arday)

> *I think so. But I think one of the most interesting aspects of it is seeing how shocked people are at the concept of doing scholarship that goes beyond what they have traditionally seen as valuable. And it's interesting to see people's objections to subverting how things have been done before. I think overall people like what we do and I think it is one of many examples of embracing neurodivergent ways of doing scholarship.* (Lewis)

Generating scholarship that goes beyond the written word (through broadcasting, scripting, video, radio, public engagement and education consultancy) has been at the forefront of the development of both authors' sociological imagination. Although the evidence suggests that these pursuits have led to positive career progression, Lewis still emphasises how value, or resistance to doing things differently, remains the challenge. Both authors are clear that they are *the lucky few* and that their experiences as Black neurodivergent sociologists are exceptional rather than ordinary. Embracing neurodiversity – with greater critique of neurotypical hegemony in the UKHE sector – requires an ongoing questioning of all our academic processes, one that attends in a meaningful way to what and who is considered to be of value.

The questions posed here about the impact of the racialisation of neurotypical hegemony have been explicitly attentive to politics of neurodiversity in the context of an always already institutionally racist sector. A true engagement with the possibilities of neurodivergence in UKHE would enable our scholarly community to embrace the hopeful possibilities of a scholarship resistant to elitism that centres intellectual fluidity (hooks, 2000).

> *As we see more representation of neurodiversity entering the public domain it all feels very celebratory which is great, but we never actually spoke about what it means? We are celebrating it before we have actually spoken about it. So we are saying we are celebrating something that we don't fully understand yet. We don't understand how people navigate neurodiversity and we haven't actually modified many of our processes and we still use the same idea of the same glove fits everyone.* (Arday)

This final extract takes us back to our discussion, above, of advances in the inclusion of neurodiversity. A more general lack of understanding of the internalised and external impact of adapting to neurotypical hegemony is just one reason why both authors remain sceptical about overwhelmingly neoliberal engagements with neurodiversity. A holistic look at these matters needs to be attentive to social justice, as well as to what Radulski calls neurotypical privilege. Resisting the individualising of neurology provides space, not only to attend to how structures and technologies of power (Lentin, 2020) stratify neurodiversity through intersections of race, class and gender, but also to look at how

society perceives neurological differences in a way that resists reductive and internalised depictions of us as Black neurodivergents.

Conclusion

This article offers a sociologically informed intervention to the increasing amount of work by Black neurodivergent scholars that both questions and responds to the failure to appreciate how their place in the structure of valued academic scholarship is limited by racism, elitism and ablism. Citing the disconnect between the educational pipeline, race and the neurodivergent students who later become scholars or academic staff, we engage with the social reproduction of elitist measures of success in academia that systematically exclude Black neurodivergents.

We wanted not just to demonstrate the personal toll of the systematic exclusion of Black scholars in the production of sociological thought (and UKHE more broadly), but to go further, by addressing how this exclusion is magnified by neurodiversity. Navigating the racialisation of neurotypical hegemony, and working to avoid double jeopardy while doing scholarship in a sector that has many other issues is an everyday challenge entrenched in structures of marginalisation which are deeply personal and political to us as Black sociologists. There is clearly a more general lack of acknowledgement of the impact of neurodivergence on academic staff in the face of institutional neurotypical hegemony, but our contentions in this article are concerned with an ever-present and acutely felt lack of appreciation of how neurodiversity becomes racialised when it comes to the normative and everyday practices of becoming a valued scholar.

To be both Black and neurodivergent in academia requires multiple engagements with critique that has not only already positioned our expertise as marginal, but which also considers our ways of thinking, doing and communicating scholarship to be inferior. Our ways of doing sociology, and of being and becoming sociologists, require us to suppress multiple neurodivergent traits while also grappling with the impact of the racialisation of Blackness, a process intensified by the social reproduction of race in a sector still grappling with institutional racism. Thus, the intersectional exclusions faced by Black neurodiverse scholars are an integral component of our collective processes of knowledge production in academia. Exploring race and neurodiversity together raises questions relating to normative cultures, policies and practices that go beyond the individualised accounts explored here and pose a challenge for our research and work cultures. Future interventions on race, neurodiversity and academia should continue to explore how sociological imagination(s) and dialogical knowledge production can help to address how racism and ableism produce particular processes of marginality that takes seriously the combination of value and the everyday nature of producing scholarship.

Finally, we turn to Robbie Shilliam's 2014 blog post, titled *Black Academia in Britain*, which both situated and described the dismal response from the sector to the position and inclusion of Black academics in UKHE. The primary takeaway from Shilliam's post was that *our pursuits and our ordinariness* as Black scholars should be at the forefront of how we are received in academia. Put simply, Shilliam is clear that Black people should be allowed to be comfortable in the space they have chosen to

be in – 'they want to live a considered life, like any other intellectual'. We remain reassured by Shilliam's reflections, but also use these wise words as a signal, not only to our white colleagues and fellow sociologists, but also to our neurotypical siblings. In this way, and in line with the historical and contemporary strands of revolutionary analysis presented by Sami Schalk in *Black Disability Politics*, the matter of neurodiversity and disability more broadly must be included in all Black liberation movements (Schalk, 2022). The Black radical tradition of education involves a drive for knowledge, for learning and for culture, whilst remaining vigilant about exactly who such notions include. As Black neurodivergents, our value can be found not just in our ordinariness but also in the fact that *we'll see things they'll never see.*

Notes

1. We use Black here to refer to people of Black and mixed Black African and Caribbean descent.
2. The term 'neurotypical hegemony' is used throughout, inspired by Radulski (2022, p. 8), who describes the social processes by which 'the neurological majority have the benefit of shaping cultural norms for society and communication that reflect their own traits and characteristics'.
3. The title of the article is a lyric from the Oasis song, Live Forever (1994). The song lyrics are used to pay homage to Arday's mother (Gifty Arday) who used music to help him to understand social interactions. The authors also chose this lyric – with the word 'never' – to be read as symbolic rather than literal. We do not intend to describe these discussions as determined, but more to stress how our neurodivergent ways of being, living and thinking transcend neurotypicality.
4. We name Arday's diagnosis of Asperger's syndrome. However, experts now recommend that the eponymous medical term should be abandoned. Through archival research, Herwig Czech has revealed that Hans Asperger cooperated extensively with the Nazi regime and its programmes of eugenics. Czech showed that Asperger referred dozens of children to a clinic called Am Spiegelgrund in Vienna, where they were experimented on or put to death. Nearly 800 children, many of whom were disabled or sick, were killed there (Czech, 2018).
5. The Research Excellence Framework (REF) assesses research done in UKHE. Framed around a benchmark of 'excellence', it ranks written outputs from 'unclassified' to four star. 'Units of assessment' map broadly on to disciplines and a panel of senior academics reads and scores the submissions. Full-time academics are required to submit four 'outputs' to the Research Excellence Framework exercise.
6. The Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) is a national exercise, introduced by the government in England. It aims to assess and ensure excellent outcomes for students moving on to graduate level employment or further study.

References

Adams, T.E., Holman Jones, S., & Ellis, C. (Eds.). (2013). *Handbook of autoethnography* (1st ed.). Routledge.

ADHD Babes. (n.d.). *ADHD Babes*. www.adhdbabes.com

Arday, J. (2019). Dismantling power and privilege through reflexivity: Negotiating normative Whiteness, the Eurocentric curriculum and racial micro-aggressions within the Academy. *Whiteness and Education*, *3*(2), 141–161. https://doi.org/10.1080/23793406.2019.1574211

Arday, J. (2021). *Facing adversity with a grin* [Video]. TED Talks. www.ted.com/talks/jason_arday_facing_adversity_with_a_grin_with_bsl?language=en

Arday, J. (2022). 'More to prove and more to lose': Race, racism and precarious employment in higher education. *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, *43*(4), 513–533. https://doi.org/10.1080/01425692.2022.2074375

Arday, J., Branchu, C., & Boliver, V. (2021). What do we know about black and minority ethnic (BAME) participation in UK higher education? *Social Policy and Society*, *21*(1), 12–25. https://doi.org/10.1017/s1474746421000579

Arday, J., & Mirza, H. S. (Eds.). (2018). *Dismantling race in higher education: Racism, whiteness and decolonising the academy*. Palgrave Macmillan.

Back, L. (2015). Why everyday life matters: class, community and making life livable. *Sociology*, *49*(5), 820–836. https://doi.org/10.1177/0038038515589292

Bagatell, N. (2007). Orchestrating voices: Autism, identity and the power of discourse. *Disability & Society*, *22*(4), 413–426. https://doi.org/10.1080/09687590701337967

Belek, B. (2022). 'A smaller mask': Freedom and authenticity in autistic space. *Culture, Medicine, and Psychiatry*. Advance online publication. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11013-022-09794-1

Bhambra, G. K. (2014). Postcolonial and decolonial dialogues. *Postcolonial Studies*, *17*(2), 115–121. https://doi.org/10.1080/13688790.2014.966414

Bhambra, G. K., & Holmwood, J. (2021). *Colonialism and modern social theory*. Polity Press.

Bhopal, K. (2022). 'We can talk the talk, but we're not allowed to walk the walk': The role of equality and diversity staff in higher education institutions in England. *Higher Education*, *85*(2), 325–339. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10734-022-00835-7

Billig, M. (2013). *Learn to write badly: How to succeed in the social sciences*. Cambridge University Press.

Blanchett, W. (2006). Disproportionate representation of African Americans in special education: Acknowledging the role of White privilege and racism. *Educational Researcher*, *35*(6), 24–28.

Blume, H. (1998, September). Neurodiversity: On the neurological underpinnings of geekdom. *The Atlantic*. www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/1998/09/neurodiversity/305909

Borland, J., & James, S. (1999). The learning experience of students with disabilities in higher education: A case study of a UK university. *Disability & Society*, *14*(1), 901–920. https://doi.org/10.1080/01425692.2011.596380

Boylorn, R. M., & Orbe, M. P. (Eds.). (2014). *Critical autoethnography: Intersecting cultural identities in everyday life* (1st ed.). Routledge.

Brown-Vincent, L. D. (2019). Seeing it for wearing it: Autoethnography as black feminist methodology. *Taboo: The Journal of Culture and Education*, *18*(1). https://doi.org/10.31390/taboo.18.1.08

Burawoy, M. (2005). For public sociology. *American Sociological Review*, *70*(1), 4–28. https://doi.org/10.1177/000312240507000102

Cage, E., & Troxell-Whitman, Z. (2019). Understanding the reasons, contexts and costs of camouflaging for autistic adults. *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders*, *49*(5), 1899–1911. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10803-018-03878-x

Coard, B. (1971). Making black children subnormal in Britain. *Equity & Excellence in Education*, *9*(5), 49–52. https://doi.org/10.1080/0020486710090509

Collins, P. H. (2012). Looking back, moving ahead: Scholarship in service to social justice. *Gender & Society*, *26*(1), 14–22. https://doi.org/10.1177/0891243211434766

Combahee River Collective. (2015). *The Combahee River Collective statement* [Web Archive]. Library of Congress. www.loc.gov/item/lcwaN0028151/ (Original work published 1977).

Crenshaw, K. (1991). Mapping the margins: Intersectionality, identity politics, and violence against women of color. *Stanford Law Review*, *43*(6), 1241–1299. https://doi.org/10.2307/1229039

Czech, H. (2018). Hans Asperger, National Socialism, and 'race hygiene' in Nazi-era Vienna. *Molecular Autism*, *9*, 29. https://doi.org/10.1186/s13229-018-0208-6

Davies, B. (2020). Life in neoliberal institutions: Australian stories. *Qualitative Inquiry*, *26*(7), 748–754. https://doi.org/10.1177/1077800419878737

Denzin, N. (2014). *Interpretive autoethnography*. Sage.

Disability Discrimination Act. (1995). www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1995/50/contents/enacted

Du Bois, W. E. B. (1961). *The souls of black folk*. Fawcett Publications (Original work published 1903).

Erdmans, M. P. (2007). The personal is political, but is it academic? *Journal of American Ethnic History*, *26*(4), 7–23. http://www.jstor.org/stable/40543197

Fanon, F. (1986). *Black skin, white masks*. Pluto Press.

Fierros, E. G., & Conroy, J. W. (2002). Double jeopardy: An exploration of restrictiveness and race in special education. In D. J. Losen & G. Orfield (Eds.), *Racial inequity in special education* (pp. 39–70). Harvard Education Press.

Gilroy, P. (2001). *Against race: Imagining political culture beyond the color line*. Belknap Press.

Giroux, H. A. (2003). Selling out higher education. *Policy Futures in Education*, *1*(1), 179–200. https://doi.org/10.2304/pfie.2003.1.1.6

Go, J. (2020). Race, empire, and epistemic exclusion: Or the structures of sociological thought. *Sociological Theory*, *38*(2), 79–100. https://doi.org/10.1177/0735275120926213

Goodley, D. (2007). Towards socially just pedagogies: Deleuzoguattarian critical disability studies. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, *11*(3), 317–334. https://doi.org/10.1080/13603110701238769

Gramsci, A. (1971). *Selections from the prison notebooks of Antonio Gramsci*. International Publishers.

Hall, S. (1986). Gramsci's relevance for the study of race and ethnicity. *The Journal of Communication Inquiry*, *10*(2), 5–27. https://doi.org/10.1177/019685998601000202

Hall, S., Critcher, C., Jefferson, T., Clarke, J., & Roberts, B. (1978). *Policing the crisis: Mugging, the state, and law and order*. Macmillan.

Holman Jones, S., Adams, T., & Ellis, C. (2013). Introduction. In T. E. Adams, S. Holman Jones, & C. Ellis (Eds.), *Handbook of autoethnography* (pp. 1–20, 1st ed.). Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315427812

hooks, b. (2000). *Feminism is for everybody: Passionate politics*. South End Press.

hooks, b. (2006). *Outlaw culture: Resisting representations*. Routledge.

Jeffries, J. G., & Ahmed, W. (2022). Marketing #neurodiversity for well-being. *Journal of Consumer Marketing*, *39*(6), 632–648.

Johnson, A., Joseph-Salisbury, R., & Kamunge, B. (2018). *The fire now: Anti-racist scholarship in times of explicit racial violence*. Zed Books.

Joseph-Salisbury, R. (2018). Black mixed-race men, perceptions of the family, and the cultivation of 'post-racial' resilience. *Ethnicities*, *18*(1), 86–105. https://doi.org/10.1177/1468796817739667

Leading Routes. (n.d.). *Leading Routes*. https://leadingroutes.org/

Lentin, A. (2020). *Why race still matters*. Polity Press.

Leonardo, Z., & Broderick, A. A. (2011). Smartness as property: A critical exploration of inter-sections between whiteness and disability studies. *Teachers College Record*, *113*(10), 2206–2232. https://doi.org/10.1177/016146811111301008

Lewis, C. (2020). Retrieving memories of dialogical knowledge production: COVID-19 and the global (re) awakening to systemic racism. *European Journal of Women's Studies*, *27*(4), 413–419. https://doi.org/10.1177/1350506820951937

Lewis, C., & Ofori-Addo, G. (2022–present). *The surviving society podcast* [Audio podcast]. https://soundcloud.com/user-622675754/

Lewis, C., Papadakis, S., Regis, T., & Ofori-Addo, G. (2017–2019). *The surviving society podcast* [Audio podcast]. https://soundcloud.com/user-622675754/

Lewis, C., Regis, T., & Ofori-Addo, G. (2019–2022). *The surviving society podcast* [Audio podcast]. https://soundcloud.com/user-622675754/

Lorde, A. (2019). *Sister outsider*. Penguin (Original work published 1984).

Madriaga, M. (2007). Enduring disablism: Students with dyslexia and their pathways into UK higher education and beyond. *Disability & Society*, *22*(4), 399–412. https://doi.org/10.1080/09687590701337942

Madriaga, M., Hanson, K., Kay, H., & Walker, A. (2011). Marking out normalcy and disability in higher education, *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, *32*(6), 901–920. https://doi.org/10.1080/01425692.2011.596380

Mallett, R., & Runswick-Cole, K. (2012). Commodifying autism: The cultural contexts of 'disability' in the academy. In D. Goodley, B. Hughes & L. J. Davis (Eds.), *Disability and social theory* (pp. 33–51). Palgrave Macmillan.

Miller, R., Rees, J., & Pearson, A. C. S. (2021). 'Masking is life': Experiences of masking in autistic and nonautistic adults. *Autism in Adulthood*, *3*(4), 330–338. https://doi.org/10.1089/aut.2020.0083

Mills, C. (1959). *The sociological imagination*. Oxford University Press.

Mobeen, A., Mugaju, E., & Arday, J. (2023, March). *At 18, I could not read, now I'm a Cambridge professor* [Radio broadcast]. BBC Outlook. www.bbc.co.uk/sounds/play/w3ct4r2y

Myers, G. (2020). *Rethinking urbanism: Lessons from postcolonialism and the global south*. Policy Press.

National Autistic Society. (n.d.). *National Autistic Society*. www.autism.org.uk/

Parnell-Berry, B., & Michel, N. (2020). Editorial: (De-)facing the dark face of Europe: the ongoing struggle against blackface and anti-Black racist imagery. *Darkmatter Journal* [Special issue]. https://darkmatter-hub.pubpub.org/pub/b7rrdl8m/release/3

Pickens, T. (2019). *Black madness: Mad blackness*. Duke University Press.

Pilkington, A. (2013). The interacting dynamics of institutional racism in higher education. *Race, Ethnicity and Education*, *16*(2), 225–245.

Pollak, D. (2009). *Neurodiversity in higher education: Positive responses to specific learning differences*. John Wiley.

Price, M. (2011). *Mad at school: Rhetorics of mental disability and academic life*. University of Michigan.

Radulski, E. M. (2022). Conceptualising autistic masking, camouflaging and neurotypical privilege: Towards a minority group model of neurodiversity. *Human Development*, *66*, 1–15. https://doi.org/10.1159/000524122

Rollock, N. (2021). 'I would have become wallpaper had racism had its way': Black female professors, racial battle fatigue, and strategies for surviving higher education. *Peabody Journal of Education*, *96*(2), 206–217. https://doi.org/10.1080/0161956x.2021.1905361

Runswick-Cole, K. (2014). 'Us' and 'them': The limits and possibilities of a 'politics of neurodiversity' in neoliberal times. *Disability & Society*, *29*(7), 1117–1129. https://doi.org/10.1080/09687599.2014.910107

Sasson, N. J., Faso, D. J., Nugent, J., Lovell, S., Kennedy, D. P., & Grossman, R. B. (2017). Neurotypical peers are less willing to interact with those with autism based on thin slice judgments. *Scientific Reports*, *7*(1), 40700. https://doi.org/10.1038/srep40700

Schalk, S. (2022). *Black disability politics*. Duke University Press.

Seymour, H. N., & Seymour, C. M. (1979). The symbolism of Ebonics: I'd rather switch than fight. *Journal of Black Studies*, *10*(2), 397–410.

Shaw, P., Stringaris, A., Nigg, J., & Leibenluft, E. (2014). Emotion dysregulation in attention deficit hyperactivity disorder. *The American Journal of Psychiatry*, *171*(3), 276–293. https://doi.org/10.1176/appi.ajp.2013.13070966

Shilliam, R. (2014, July 28). *Black academia in Britain*. https://thedisorderofthings.com/2014/07/28/black-academia-in-britain

Silbiger, N. J., & Stubler, A. D. (2019). Unprofessional peer reviews disproportionately harm underrepresented groups in STEM. *PeerJ*, *7*, e8247. https://doi.org/10.7717/peerj.8247

Singer, J. (1996). *Odd people in: The birth of community amongst people on the 'autistic spectrum': A personal exploration of a new social movement based on neurological diversity* [Thesis, University of Technology, Sydney].

Singer, J. (2022). *Reflections on neurodiversity*. https://neurodiversity2.blogspot.com/

Skeggs, B. (2014). Values beyond value? Is anything beyond the logic of capital? *The British Journal of Sociology*, *65*(1), 1–20. https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-4446.12072

Smith, C. A. (2018). *Cite black women: A critical praxis*. www.citeblackwomencollective.org/our-praxis.html

The Donaldson Trust. (n.d.). *The Donaldson Trust*. www.donaldsons.org.uk/

The Runnymede Trust. (n.d.). *The Runnymede Trust*. www.runnymedetrust.org/

The Ubele Initiative. (n.d.). *The Ubele Initiative*. www.ubele.org

Toyosaki, S. (2018). Toward de/postcolonial auto-ethnography: Critical relationality with the academic second persona. *Cultural Studies ↔ Critical Methodologies*, *18*(1), 32–42. https://doi.org/10.1177/1532708617735133

Walker, E. (2022). [Twitter thread]. https://twitter.com/underafelledsky/status/1480302662876860419

Wallace, S., Nazroo, J., & Bécares, L. (2016). Cumulative effect of racial discrimination on the mental health of ethnic minorities in the United Kingdom. *American Journal of Public Health*, *106*(7), 1294–1300. https://doi.org/10.2105/AJPH.2016.303121

Williams, P., Bath, S., Arday, J., & Lewis, C. (2019). *The broken pipeline report*. Leading Routes. https://leadingroutes.org/mdocs-posts/the-broken-pipeline-barriers-to-black-students-accessing-research-council-funding

Yancy, G. (2017). *Black bodies, white gazes* (2nd ed.). Rowman and Littlefield.