

Navigating Blackness in Educational Psychology: Reflections of a Trainee Educational Psychologist

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The voices of racialised individuals in educational psychology are suppressed in the United Kingdom (UK). The experiences of educational psychologists (EPs) from under-represented groups can make a valuable contribution to the assemblage of voices in the profession. This article is a provocation of educational psychology, with the ambition of evoking various feelings for the audience. I take the reader on a personal journey of reconstructing educational psychology through the lens of psychopolitics, critical race theory and postcolonial theory. These theories draw on the structural and psychological effects of colonialism to interrogate present ways of living. Firstly, I draw on my experiences of estrangement whilst completing the educational psychology training course. This consequently led to feeling isolated in navigating my relationship with educational psychology. I call for course tutors to support trainee educational psychologists (TEPs) through the sense-making process of racialisation, which can be an embodied experience and often unspoken. Secondly, I draw on the histories of educational psychology, particularly scientific racism to consider the ongoing “hauntings” of colonialism in practice, which may contribute to some of the feelings of displacement. I invite EPs on this journey with me, to consider their positioning in relation to colonialism and psychology. The implications for educational psychology are considered, including the need to resurrect the relationship between educational psychology and racialisation. I conclude by embracing the term “conscientization”, as a way of mobilising change in the profession. This article is a reflective piece, mindfully written, using less-typical academic journal styles to make it accessible and avoid marginalising others.

Keywords: postcolonialism, autoethnography, racialisation, conscientization, othering

A Day in the Life of a Trainee Educational Psychologist

Team meetings, conferences, development days, person-centred review meetings, Special Educational Needs panels. I meet different people and learn new knowledge. Consultations, assessments, observations — I am needed to look at what is going on with a child . . . any advice or strategies are welcomed by the teachers in school. As an educational psychologist, influence is the aim of the game. Having influence in meetings . . . shaping schools and Special Educational Needs Coordinators in how to work in a particular way. I have the power to dictate how to work and impose my way of thinking on teachers, teaching assistants, parents and children. I can manipulate and be strategic in how I shape work and people but only in the interests of the schools, children and families. How I think things should be or could work better. The immense amount of work out there. Children, families and schools believe we can make a difference. Problems exist out there. Me here, I am the rational, objective, reasonable one. There is nothing wrong with me — so I cast my rod with the best bait . . . like I am fishing for the finest catch.

What is it about people’s problems? I get a buzz every time the next problem comes my way. The thrill, excitement, the challenge. Reminding me how OK I am and that there are people “out there” who need me to intervene with them. But not any help, Educational Psychologist help — as I ride on my horse, the trumpets sound.

Introduction

This poem was devised from multiple experiences during my time on placement within a Local Authority (LA) Educational Psychology Service (EPS) in north-west England. The poems in this article communicate two key arguments. The opening argument of this article explores my experiences of completing the Doctorate in Educational and Child Psychology. My research focused on the telling of personal stories using autoethnography. Autoethnography uses reflexive, biographical data as a means of inquiry (Ellis, 2004; LeFrançois, 2013). Firstly, I begin by positioning my identity, to situate my reflections regarding the relationship between myself, as a Black female educational psychologist and an ongoing journey of feeling estranged from the profession (Fanon, 1967; Odusanya et al., 2018). Throughout my daily experi-

ences, be it at work, in the community or within education, being Black comes with a variety of descriptions and perceptions, as well as “othering”. Othering could be described as a comparison marker used as a basis to form a judgement by some assumed standard (Rollock et al., 2011). Rollock et al. discuss Black people’s education experience in the 1970s and 80s, where an awareness of being racially minoritised developed, and where descriptors of the Black body were exoticised and sexualised in relation to shape, posture and hair texture. Othering describes individuals existing in an identity perceived as appropriate for this assumed marker (Black, female, able-bodied).

I draw on critical race theory and postcolonial theory of racialisation, which reverses the othering gaze to interrogate theories of “Whiteness” as opposed to more traditional approaches on exploring “race”. I use racialisation to emphasise the social construction of “race”, which captures multiple persons in a social interaction and contextualises the objectification of bodies as situated in social and historical discourses (Fassin, 2011). The term Whiteness recognises that racism goes beyond individual prejudice but, rather, places wider forms of injustices and inequalities at a societal level. I draw on the literature by clinical psychologists regarding minority ethnic experiences in psychology to argue that estrangement conversations are well established in clinical psychology (McInnis, 2002) but discussed less in educational psychology.

Secondly, I trace the past of educational psychology to highlight the racial histories associated with the profession in relation to scientific racism (Gutherie, 1998) and the eugenics movement (Saini, 2019). Such histories are seen to haunt (Frosh, 2012) present-day educational psychology, which can be seen in the training, research and practice of educational psychologists. Hauntings describe the resurrecting of former practices which manifest in the present day. This brings me to unpack key literature in coloniality which includes postcolonial theory (Bhabha, 1994; Nandy, 1983) and coloniality, that is, that colonialism continues to manifest in the present day and has psychological effects on individuals (Mignolo, 2007). I draw on the anti-colonial thinking of Frantz Fanon (1967) (a psychiatrist from colonised Martinique, who worked in colonised Algeria) and Hook (2005) to incorporate “psychopolitics” to make visible racialising practices and disrupt taken-for-granted truths about racialised narratives. Psychopolitics is an approach established within critical psychology which seeks to combine both politics and psychology to make sense of inequalities.

Making the experiences of racialised students more visible invites opportunities to reflect on one’s positioning within the profession and creates new possibilities for change. I draw on Biko’s (1987) notion of “conscientization”. Steve Biko, a South African activist, was writing at the time of apartheid and considering ways of overcoming the daily structural op-

pressions in South Africa. To resist oppressive practices and promote progression, he coined the term conscientization, which frames transformation as a process which begins at the individual level. It is the individual mind which can have the biggest effect on structural oppression.

Positionality

In this article, I identify as Black. Black refers to people with high skin pigmentation and melanin, with ancestors originating from Africa. I hold onto the narratives which may be associated with “Blackness”, which refers to the way Black people have become socially constructed in society, as an embodied experience. The social constructions of Blackness can clarify how the processes of oppression, subjugation and marginalisation operate in educational psychology. Blackness refers to the ways in which Black people behave, think and act, which over time have become expected from Black people whilst appreciating that there are multiple versions and constructions of Black people (Abdi, 2015; Fanon, 1967). At the same time, defining “race” or “ethnicity” is not only something which can be categorised as a census tick-box exercise. The term race is typically defined by biological, physical differences, which historically led to the categorisation of people into groups (Gould, 1981). Definitions of race now acknowledge how people conduct themselves in social contexts (Knowles, 2003). Race definitions should additionally appreciate both the communicative and relational aspects of language and cultural influences which focus on social mechanisms. Whilst identifying as Black, I also appreciate intersectionality (Crenshaw, 1991), which considers the multiple dimensions which incorporate gender, sexuality, “dis”-ability and class in relation to oppression and subjugation. Intersectionality appreciates that various forms of oppression can co-exist in multiple forms depending on these dimensions, for example, Black and female. The relationship between my “Blackness” and experiences of the educational psychology training course was an ongoing battle, as I regularly felt like an “outsider within” (Collins, 1991). That is, experiencing a sense of feeling on the periphery of the profession because of my Blackness, whilst embarking on a shared journey of research and teachings with TEPs.

Racialisation can also crystallise the nuances of body, place and space which captures the shifting position of the Black female body (Mohanram, 1999). Although my body is physically in the UK, I recognise my colonial history through the parenting I received and the stories shared, which affects my outlook of the world (Mohanram, 1999). Fear of not feeling good enough and silencing myself to assimilate into the profession continues to be commonplace in becoming an educational psychologist.

Why is Giving Voice to “Racialised” EPs Important?

The experiences of racialised TEPs in the UK appears to be an area which is under-researched. Within clinical psychology, there are established conversations which explore institutional racism (McInnis, 2002) and assumptions within psychology of “Whiteness” that exclude minority ethnic communities (Wood & Patel, 2019). Discourses on global White supremacy and Whiteness argue that historical and current practices, laws and policies embedded and implicit within society seek to, directly and indirectly, disadvantage racialised people. Society is, therefore, set up so that racialised people do not receive the services, goods and opportunities which are available to the White majority. Whiteness is a term which can often be seen in the literature relating to critical race theory (Ladson-Billings, 1998). It argues that racism goes beyond individual prejudice, towards wider forms of injustices at a societal level. These terms are applied to understand psychology and reverse the gaze.

In addition to the sociohistorical lens of psychology, the subjectivities of racialised people in psychology are noticeably absent from discussions relating to racism and psychology (Howarth & Hook, 2005). Howarth and Hook argue that a disruption is needed on how race is theorised, to reverse the “psychological gaze”. Howarth and Hook believe that racialisation and Whiteness should not be understood as individual difficulties but, rather, the influences from wider social structures. Gaze is often used to understand how a phenomenon from a particular viewpoint is associated with the unequal distribution of power (Foucault, 1977). For example, critical race theorists look at the “White gaze” which permeates daily living and structurally in institutions operating within White privilege (Ladson-Billings, 1998). Consequently, White privilege perpetuates social inequality in society. Furthermore, instead of “othering” racialised communities, critical race theory calls for the interrogation of Whiteness as the measure of the norm. As outlined in my poem *Whose Problem is it Anyway* (below), autism was viewed as dysfunctional and unquestionable, whereas educational psychology was viewed as valid and reliable. It is the reversing of the gaze which invites a critical platform for interrogation into educational psychology using a psychopolitical framework.

There are also accounts from Black trainee clinical psychologists making sense of their identities in the context of the training course, focusing on the influence of language, power and material realities (Paulraj, 2016), feelings of estrangement from the profession (Odusanya et al., 2018), the emotional work of negotiating multiple identities (Shah, 2010) and feeling a strong sense of Eurocentric narratives on the training course and within placement contexts (Prajapati et al., 2019). These emerging voices have led to a call to address Whiteness through self-reflection in the clinical psychology training course at the University of East London

(Wood & Patel, 2019). The debates in educational psychology appear less established and not in line with our clinical psychologist counterparts. With this in mind, I draw on literature from clinical psychology. There are many benefits to addressing racialisation in educational psychology; one reason is to create a platform for rethinking (Gilham, 1978) what we do and why we do it (Cameron, 2006; Ingleby, 1974).

I echo many of the experiences described by my clinical psychology colleagues. While studying on the educational psychology training course, I approached the profession with curiosity, self-reflection and sought opportunities to deconstruct possible taken-for-granted truths. Examples of truth claims are identified in the opening of the poem *Whose Problem is it Anyway*, where I reflect on the clinical diagnosis of autism. I allude to the unquestioning reality of many conditions that I encountered. Questioning truth claims instinctually became my mode of survival when training.

Whose Problem is it Anyway?

An Asian family are in complete denial about an autism diagnosis.

I am startled at what I hear!

A whole political and historical past flooding back.

Whose problem is it anyway?

Firstly, we should ask how these disorders have become known as they are today.

Secondly, a problematic family or a problematic profession?

Our tools, knowledges and assessments are viewed as valid, reliable, and robust representations.

Whose problem is it anyway?

Should these be the questions we should ask ourselves?

Or am I looking too inwardly at myself?

It should be my conversations with staff, parents and young people and families that are the primary and most important relationships I have.

PREVENT, DE-RADICALISATION become part of our discourse.

I see male, Asian young people as the perpetrators, not victims.

I get annoyed with myself ...

I wonder ...

Again, whose problem is it anyway?

Throughout the training course, I was navigating multiple identities (Shah, 2010). On the one hand, navigating the theory, practices and teachings from the university was a necessary part of educational psychology training (British Psychological Society, 2016). On the other hand, educational psychology offers little acknowledgement of the racialised histories associated with psychology (Bulhan, 2015; Guthrie, 1998). There may be a lesser expectation from the discipline to understand the experiences and embodiment of psychology that racialised people value as important (Shah, 2010).

Shah reported feelings of disconnection learning Western theories on the clinical psychology training course and experiencing hardship for not being White in a largely White profession, leading to feelings of “internal oppression”. Prajapati et al.’s (2019) description of incongruence between racial identities and professional identities resonated with my experiences as a TEP. This tenuous position can lead Black and minority ethnic trainees to distance themselves from their own identities, in order to be accepted by the profession, training course and tutors (Grehoua, 2020).

For myself, the expectations of being poorly understood by the profession, practising and training as a psychologist led to feelings of being devalued. The reminders of not feeling “good enough” because adopting academic language did not feel a natural part of my repertoire and having to work hard to understand journals are said to consequently lead to “imposter syndrome” (Bawa et al., 2019). This could be an experience shared by many trainees who identify as oppressed (class or sexuality), or who occupy spaces of privilege. Privilege, here, may refer to occupying some form of inherited power. I feel privilege in writing this article; however, I advocate for dialogue between educational psychology and racialisation.

There is something distinct about educational psychology as a discipline marked by scientific racism and eugenics (discussed later), and yet the discipline rarely engages with work on racialisation. In a review of educational-psychology-specific journals, it was noted that 1.3 per cent of articles in an eleven-year window were “race-based” or “race-reimagined” studies (DeCuir-Gunby & Schutz, 2014). That is, these articles engaged in what the American authors described as concepts and constructs directly relating to race. Given that this is an American study, discussions on race and the sociopolitical history are markedly different to the UK, thus making comparisons difficult. However, the equivalent journal statistics are likely to be similar (or lower) in the UK, which is surprising given the racial tensions in the UK relating to Brexit (for Britain to exit the European Union) and deradicalisation strategies (eradicating extremist ideas) through the teaching of “British Values” in schools (Winter & Mills, 2018).

Reflections as a Trainee — Identity Politics and Postcolonial Theory

As part of the training course, an emphasis was placed on reflexivity, intersubjectivity and critical thinking. These principles informed my approach to the profession and assisted with the sense-making process of “who I am” and “what I am doing”. To enable self-reflection, as part of the doctoral thesis, I kept a diary whilst on placement in an LA setting. Utilising an autoethnographic approach, weekly records were collected of encounters, meetings and interactions, to place myself under scrutiny. Autoethnography uses reflexive, bio-

graphical data as a means of inquiry (LeFrancois, 2013).

To communicate my experiences of practising educational psychology, poetic transcriptions (Glesne, 1997) were used, which sits outside of more traditional methods of expression (which correlates with my outsider positioning). The poems included in this article relate to occupying an “outsider within” position. Poetic transcriptions are a decolonised methodology which embraces writing on the margins (Kovach, 2005; Smith, 2012). The poems connect with the reader on a deeper level whilst valuing the participant’s voice. The merging of various selves in the poems (author, researcher, storyteller) is reflective of navigating multiple identities as a trainee. The poems may evoke a sense of discomfort which forms part of my provocation of the profession.

In relation to navigating multiple selves, Fanon (1967) discusses the notion of “double self”, which explains the feeling of being in two places at once and how Black people must wear “White masks” to survive a White world. He used the term “White soul” (Fanon, 1967) to describe a disconnect between the Black body and the colonised mind. He believed that the mind had come to emulate the psychologised aspects of colonialism (language, dress etc.). My personal experiences of EP practice resonate with being a Black body possessing a White soul, that is, emulating aspects of psychology which have links to eugenics and colonialism to survive the profession. The work of Fanon (1967) demonstrates that the effects of colonialism continue to influence racialised people living in the Metropolis (UK) through coloniality. Whilst searching for an identity within the profession, I was unsure of the best way to position myself. Nandy (1983) (a postcolonial theorist) discusses “brown sahibs” (of Indian origin) during the time of colonialism in India. Brown sahibs saw themselves as occupying the ambivalent space “in-between” — Indian but also pro-Imperialist as their selfhood had been defined by British colonisers. Adopting an in-between identity highlights the possibility of a fluid self of being able to hold onto two parts. For me, the “Blackness” of myself and the “Whiteness” of educational psychology makes being “in between” emotionally draining but possible through politicising and historicising my practice.

The History of Educational Psychology and Hauntings of Colonialism

Retracing the relationship between psychology and its history uncovers what psychology is and how we have come to know it (Danziger, 1997, 2013). The idea of resurrecting the past is a strong theme within postcolonial theory. Frosh (2012) refers to “hauntings” which elicit recurring themes which perpetuate social inequalities that may exist in psychology. Educational psychology could be accused of operating within an ahistorical and depoliticised vacuum, which overlooks social and cultural influences on the profession. It

is psychology's relationship with colonialism which tends to be glossed over (Bulhan, 2015). This section contextualises the previous discussions on estrangement to locate present experiences within a historical past.

The UK has a hidden past relating to colonialism, particularly in relation to the transatlantic slave trade and the development of the Industrial Revolution, which formed the development of the UK infrastructure (Olusoga, 2016). There are various forms of colonialism related to modernity and capitalism (Loomba, 2015), and, although colonialism dates back to the fourteenth century, it could be said that it continues today as coloniality (Mignolo, 2007; Quijano, 2007). Coloniality recognises that colonial legacies continue to affect people psychologically through covert social, political, economic and discursive means (Fanon, 1967). As a trainee, I was haunted by the relationship between scientific racism and psychology. Scientific racism will be explained in greater depth in this section.

The Industrial Revolution (eighteenth century) saw Europe progress in technology and advancement. Following this period, philosophical thinkers travelled and became interested in exploring other civilizations. During the period of Enlightenment, figures such as David Hulme looked at the infrastructures of African nations and believed that these nations were less developed than Europe (Saini, 2019). Non-Europeans had not yet fully reached their potential in industrial advancement, and this quickly became conflated with innate inferiority. The physical features of Africans became markers of their separateness and permanent difference (Saini, 2019). In the early nineteenth century, there was an increasing need to "know" and "measure" individuals' capabilities based on physical attributes. By exploring physical features, it would provide a window of opportunity to know, understand and categorise individuals. Polygenists, ultimately known for distinguishing the human origins of groups, explored the idea that different races have multiple origins as opposed to a singular origin related to the "out of Africa" hypothesis (all humans evolving from Africa). Distinguishing multiple human origins was used to measure the superiority groups and less-well-deserved groups. Samuel Morton and Louis Agassiz (craniologists) formed a collection of skull sizes of different races, categorising them using a racial hierarchy with Blacks at the bottom and Whites at the top (Gould, 1981). In the mid-nineteenth century, scientific truth claims were used by physical anthropologists to study the size of lips, brains, noses and hair textures of Africans, to seek explanations for racial differences between Blacks and Caucasians (Gutherie, 1998; Saini, 2019). This polygenist work signals the very beginning of the separation and fragmentation of individuals as different and looking for identifiable features which set individuals apart. The notion of "scientific race" partly formed the justification for the transatlantic slave trade (although slavery began in the sixteenth

century) to classify Black bodies as subhuman. The scientific premise of race as a biological construction nowadays is dismissed as inaccurate. The premise of individual differences is how we continue to know educational psychology today. This work marks the beginnings of scientific racism in the profession and continues to be part of our practice, yet little is discussed on the training course about educational psychology origins.

Eugenics can be understood as a scientific means of engineering a "pure" race. Francis Galton, a key figure in eugenics, sought to improve the health and intelligence of future generations by establishing a pure race. He believed that a "race" of people could be quickly improved if the "most intelligent" were encouraged to reproduce and the "less intelligent" were not (Saini, 2019). Cyril Burt, an EP working in London in the early 1900s, was known to be associated with Galton. He contributed to discussions on measurement and advancement in relation to eugenics (Gould, 1981). Burt's general mantra was to "teach the best and forget the rest" by sending children with a lower Intelligence Quotient (IQ) to special school. Hence, these children's identity of being "less than" and "different" became a self-fulfilling prophecy. Over 100 years ago, Burt pioneered the assessment of special educational needs and assessing an individual's cognitive ability (Maliphant et al., 2003). Burt also claimed that intellectual ability is genetically determined, which validated the use of IQ standardised testing in educational psychology. As a trainee, having an awareness of the complicity in measuring individual abilities as fixed and stable raised discomfort when knowing how, historically, similar measuring principles were used to justify racial practices and stratification. As EPs, we remain complicit in maintaining the ideologies associated with scientific racism.

The discourse of prediction remains at the heart of EP practice and can go unquestioned. A necessary part of educational psychology is the measurement and categorising of the individual. Categorisation has been a historic endeavour for educational psychology and has become part of the discourses used when discussing children and their families (Williams & Goodley, 2017). Eugenics was part of a scientific discipline that assumed the primacy of heredity over environment. There can often be an overemphasis within the profession to use psychometrics which Gilham (1978) proposed over 40 years ago. Hence, further deconstruction of the profession is required, and postcolonial theory can provide a useful lens to explore inequalities.

Using Postcolonial Theory to Reconstruct Educational Psychology

Postcolonial theory focuses on the temporal and spatial location of people, particularly of people from former colonies. Fanon (1967) was dissatisfied with the operation of psychiatry under French colonial rule. His description of a young

boy shouting “*Look! a Negro*” at him when travelling on the train depicts the overpowering nature of the “White gaze” which casts Fanon’s racialised body as other and objectified (Fanon, 1967, p. 112)). The boy’s comment immediately questions Fanon’s sense of personhood, humanity, humility and his ability to represent himself. Acts of similar “hailing” (Althusser, 1971) can be seen in the Windrush scandal (Gentleman, 2018), Black Lives Matters campaigns (a social media campaign in response to disproportionate deaths of Black people at the hands of police brutality) and within some UK classrooms (Abdi, 2015). Abdi describes a British Somali boy deemed disruptive in the “White” space of the classroom, behaving in a way other than what “Whiteness” expects, and fulfilling perceived expectations of “Blackness”, that is, of how Black boys should behave. The White gaze fell upon his racialised body, as opposed to other aspects of his selfhood.

Postcolonial theorists such as Fanon (1967) centre on resistance to colonialism and European imperialism (Bhatia, 2002). It casts back to an otherwise silenced past to highlight how contemporary temporary power relations are present in colonial history (MacLeod & Bhatia, 2008). Placing the spotlight on the different forms of colonial encounters (physical and psychological), which were believed to be benevolent and well-meaning practices, can also provide psychological explanations about relationships. An exploration of encounters and relationships begins to introduce the notion of identity politics, which is an ongoing debate within educational psychology in relation to the unique contribution of the EP and ethical dilemmas (Ashton & Roberts, 2006; Burden, 1999; Cameron, 2006).

Moving away from postcolonial theory, I acknowledge the powerful positions embodied in my poems relating to status and influence. There are distinct features which set me apart as an EP — knowledge and power. As an EP, my position of power is based on knowledge construction and truths around child development (Sewell, 2016). Moore (2005) describes the dominance of assumed truths as “epistemological oppression” which can lead to a self-assurance about educational psychology as a well-meaning discipline, without questioning its underlying paradigm. In practical terms, the children and families may be positioned as less powerful, in need of psychologisation and not possessing the “expertise” of an EP. Billington (2006) describes how educational psychologists may commit “epistemological violence” by identifying deviant children and removing those who do not fit social norms to special schools — educational psychology thus operates complicitly as a form of social control. This argument supports further examples of our complicity in the fragmentation of individuals which originates from scientific racism. These distinct features maintain the role of the EP and the profession, hence being convenient and well-meaning for the practitioner. Therefore, the relationship between EP and

client is suggestive that one cannot survive without the other. It is such complicities within educational psychology which are key themes within postcolonial literature and coloniality, and proposes the need to reconstruct educational psychology.

Mobilising Change in Educational Psychology

The question remains as to whose responsibility it is for bringing about reform and change to the discipline to explicitly acknowledge racialisation. I can share my thoughts but also, I am seeking ways to bring thought into action. Should it be The Health Care and Professions Council as our professional body? The British Psychological Society or the Division of Educational and Child Psychology, which accredits the course and sets the standards of proficiencies that instigate change? The Association of Educational Psychologists, the voice of our profession? Or should change begin with the individual? Given how inseparable educational psychology and colonialism are, strategic resistance by means of “dismantling” professional bodies is less likely. However, resistance can occur through “conscientization” (Biko, 1987), that is, liberation beginning with individual subjectivity for collective action to happen. Biko believed that to overcome wider strategic forces, it is necessary that individualisation and seeking like-minded people can instigate wider change. So, what can we do as individuals for collective consciousness raising? For university course tutors, it is about seeking change in the teaching of modules on “Race and Racism” without appearing tokenistic. My experiences of feeling “othered” throughout the training course simply act as a reminder of my invisibility in the profession. Such invisibility emphasizes the need to provide platforms to debate reflexivity, discuss the embodiment of identity and explore how people may feel othered within the profession through supervision or tutorials. It should remain the duty of all of us to keep racialisation in mind (Berg et al., 2019), and this may include acknowledging ways in which psychologists feel marginalised in the profession.

Preparing psychologists for the anti-immigrant hostile environment of an ever-increasing global far-right government emphasises the need to implement meaningful, transparent ways of engaging in political discourses. I call for universities to regularly review their curriculum content and seek ways to bring racialisation, educational psychology, embodiment, identity, and subjectivity to the fore. The University of East London clinical psychology training courses include discussions on race, gender and disability, whilst demonstrating an appreciation of reflexivity (Berg et al., 2019). Berg et al. go on to discuss creating student support mechanisms through mentoring, creating safe spaces for trainee-led discussions and working with placement supervisors to engage in racialisation and marginalised discussions. Wood and Patel (2019), as course tutors on the University of East London clinical psychology course, discuss implementing

“Decolonising White Psychology” workshops which provide platforms for students and tutors to foster critical thinking towards “psychological knowledge” and consider indigenous approaches. However, opportunities and spaces for reflexivity are less favoured by Tong et al. (2019), who argue that language does not always capture the nuances in cultural upbringing. Such approaches were seen to reinforce colonial narratives of Black inferiority and the need to assimilate into Eurocentric ways. Instead, Tong et al. are supportive of developing alternative narratives of strengths and uniqueness that Black clinical psychology trainees and other under-represented groups can bring to the profession. This could contribute to the argument of privileging the voice of people who believe they occupy oppressed spaces.

A large part of this work is taking all stakeholders, be it course directors, principal educational psychologists, supervisors, course tutors, trainees, on a journey of recognition and appreciation of racialisation. Taking people on a journey which may raise (dis)comfort or defensiveness is a way to offer internal challenge and accept accountability.

Discussion

This article applies postcolonial theory, critical race theory and psychopolitics from critical psychology to educational psychology. Reading the accounts of fellow clinical psychologists highlights that I am not alone in my journey of estrangement and feeling on the periphery in the profession (Odusanya et al., 2018; Paulraj, 2016; Prajapati et al., 2019; Shah, 2010). There is a community of racialised trainees entering psychology sharing a unique and individualised experience, but this experience can bring us together. My feeling of a Black body possessing a White soul (Fanon, 1967) highlights the usefulness of postcolonial theory in explaining the disconnection between myself as a Black psychologist and educational psychology. The need to practise a type of psychology which is associated with Whiteness and, therefore, perceived as superior often leaves racialised psychologists feeling they must fit into a Westernised culture (Fanon, 1967; Shah, 2010). Superiority and privilege were explored in my opening poem, “A Day in the Life of a Trainee Educational Psychologist”, which addresses the discomfort associated with the role, knowledge, and power. Although my experiences are unique, I acknowledge other forms of marginalisation other trainees may experience related to class, sexuality and “dis”-ability.

While psychology is a diverse discipline, in the sense that there are different forms and subdisciplines in psychology, it is also important to acknowledge the lack of diversity in under-represented voices from marginalised/minoritised groups. The stories of racialised peoples are not readily available or a central part of the profession. When exploring the relationship between psychology and racism, it is hard to overlook the colonial past and oppressive practices, thus

making educational psychology and colonialism inseparable. Following my training, there can often be a reluctance to name racism and forms of oppression which exist historically and continue to be present today in the form of coloniality. I have discussed how EPs can be instrumental in using complicity of social control (deciding which children have special needs and regulating finite resources) which is masked as benevolent. Postcolonial theory begins to deconstruct some of the inequalities existing in educational psychology and the identity politics involved in the role of educational psychology. Resurrecting scientific racism challenges many aspects of the profession, such as questioning the epistemological roots of “psychological knowledge”.

I am aware that educational psychology cannot change its historical past, but I invite EPs on the journey to discover their positioning in racialisation, coloniality and scientific racism. For change to occur, it must come from the individual psychologist. Comfort can be found in “conscientization” which signals towards new ways to reform educational psychology, which can take the form of resistance and continuing the discussions about racialisation in educational psychology. Thinking of educational psychology anew is not anything original (Gilham, 1978), although this article focuses on resurrecting the past to look at ways of integrating racialisation in discussions about educational psychology, but also our practice. I seek a path which reflects myself as an educational psychologist, seeking to politicise, historicise and contextualise my work.

Conclusion

I hope to have provided a perspective on the applicability of postcolonial literature to practising educational psychology within a UK context. In sharing my experiences as a Black educational psychologist, I accept that my experiences are idiosyncratic and varying for racialised people, as well as for other marginalised groups. I hope to have linked the personal with the political through “psychopolitics” by taking micro experiences and linking them to wider political discussions on assessment, knowledge and measurement. Utilising “conscientization” in educational psychology can benefit us all by opening our minds to new ways of thinking, broadening the curriculum content and building opportunity for self-reflection. More importantly, thinking about our own positioning as EPs helps us to appreciate that our role co-exists with discourses relating to power, racialisation and subjugation.

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