Identity and Pedagogy in a University Context:
A study of student experiences and critique in the work of anti-racism in education

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Thesis: Identity and Pedagogy in a university context: A study of student experiences and critique in the work of anti-racism in education.

Abstract:

A considerable amount of work has been written on race and education in the British context since the 1960s. This work has largely focused on policy issues, curriculum development and teacher training. This work has been important largely for developments in multicultural education in the school context. In Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), the teaching of race related modules and courses have flourished since the 1980s (Jacobs 2006). This interest, however, has not translated into work on praxis, that is, anti-racist teaching practices that aim to improve the situation that students and teachers face when challenging racism.

This PhD study by publication begins to redress this by exploring student experiences and classroom dialogue. It adopts an interpretist methodological perspective and uses participant observation and interview methods. The observations and interviews are drawn from my classroom teaching, specifically, my modules dealing centrally with race and racism.
Most of the writing around race and HEIs focuses on institutional matters rather than those that seek to enable praxis. The original contribution to knowledge advanced in this critical commentary and my published works submitted here is that it underlines the importance of anti-racism as it emerges organically within classroom engagement and exchange. Anti-racist practice, I claim, becomes fundamental to the learning process, where student experiences are first considered within the teaching process. This study focuses on students' learning experiences as found in my second and third level modules on the Sociology degree on which I teach at Wolverhampton University. My publications examine students' perspectives on racism as they arise in class. They explore student identities as they are experienced and classroom interaction. In this endeavour, I focus on the ways that Critical

Theory and Feminism and Critical Pedagogy can challenge students' prior perspectives on their identities and those of others.

This work seeks to add to analyses of the ways that racism currently operates and could be challenged in HEIs. It argues that it can be challenged through more fully developing anti-racist educational practices that must engage with debates about ethnicity and identity in education, as discussed in Section One. This is because students' lived experiences are core to an understanding of how racism impacts on students' lives. This commentary advances the argument that anti-racist debates in HEIs that organically evolve from classroom teaching and learning are paramount to the work of anti-racist education in HEi, because lived experience is seen to be powerful material that can counter mainstream discourse on racism. What is distinctive about my model of anti-racist teaching and learning practices is my anti-racist practice. This informs my academic work with students and encourages them to reconsider their thinking in classroom teaching and learning. The use of Critical Race Theory and Feminist theoretical and methodological approaches and Critical Pedagogy is central to my anti-racist teaching practices in HEis.

Introduction to the Critical Commentary

The critical commentary (20,000 words, excluding references and Appendices) is designed to underpin the published work in the thesis by four essential elements:

1. Introduction to the thesis and autobiographical information;
2. A statement of the central argument, including analysis of the theoretical and methodological underpinnings;
3. A context for the published work; the publications together put forward;
4. A statement of the original contribution to knowledge advanced in the publications, by putting forward the significance of my work on anti-racist HE pedagogy.

The critical commentary is thus organised into four main sections relating to each of these elements. Please note that the Harvard system of referencing has been used throughout.

In Section One: Introduction to the thesis: autobiographical information and a personal rationale for doing anti-racism in the classroom.

The publications presented for the award of a PhD bring together into one body of work an exploratory journey in the field of anti-racist and feminist sociology of higher education. The journey begins with my reflection on my dissatisfaction with my own schooling experiences of racism. This is followed by the more empowering experiences I had as a further and higher education student. Central to my reflections in these parts is the personal experience of racism in educational contexts: the lack of voice, the experience of marginality and invisibility set against moments of resilience and empowering transformation.

There are two parallel stories drawn from my experiences of studying in Britain that led me to address the topic I have been studying for in my PhD. The first is about the damaging effects of racism in the classroom/educational context. The second is about the resilience of pupils and students, who, through their own agency and with the help of significant others, resist the racism and succeed in their educational endeavours. Together, these experiences form the backdrop to my thesis on anti-racist pedagogy in Higher Education Institutions.

Introduction

In my current job as a black - I use the term black to refer to people from the South Asian, African-Caribbean and African postcolonial diasporas present in Britain (Mirza, 1997:3) - female lecturer at a Higher Education Institution, I come across students who speak negatively about their educational experiences at school, further education and higher education. These students often share their stories of being a minority in predominantly white institutions and how these experiences have impacted on their learning. My

publications engage with Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) students at the University of Wolverhampton where I teach. They capture the more personal experiences of racism. The student voice, that is, their experiences as expressed through their narratives about racism, both within and outside of classroom discussion, is very revealing of racism when engaging with issues of identity and pedagogy. The student exchanges are pertinent moments in the work of anti-racism.

Moreover, this critical commentary explores the ways that students respond to what happens in and outside classes. It is also interested in students' *agency* in education and with the way students are able to critique racism.
In this section I reflect on my early educational memories and point to the aspects of my schooling that marginalised black pupils. I speak about the damage of racism, but also about the support from significant others, namely family and some teachers that allowed me to survive and, indeed, achieve in my schooling. I want to draw on the positive experiences of my education, so that I can reproduce these in my own teaching and learning circumstances.

I begin with a recollection of my educational experiences, first as a pupil and then as a student. Reflecting on my schooling in the late 1960s and 1970s in East End of London, I show how I am haunted by the experiences of racism, alienation, and discrimination that I experienced at those points in my education. Like many other inner-city working-class pupils, being marginalised at school was one battlefield of racism I experienced. It was a situation of '*them and us'* generally. Within the school system specifically, schoolteachers were never on our side and, for some of us, the dreaded experience of racism and class subjugation instilled a sense of worthlessness.

There are many race (ist) specific moments that I carry in my mind. Here I share only one of the worst. During a geography class when I was thirteen, our teacher began class by using the world map to refer, with mockery and abuse, to the Third World. As his ruler approached the Indian Ocean, he stopped and pointed to Mauritius, where I was born. He then told the class that this island was small and insignificant to the eye. He then walked towards

me, and said to the class, ‘Like the island, its people, too, are small.’ To demonstrate this point, he asked me to ‘display’ my hands to the class and then said, ‘Look everyone, like monkey paws, how small her hands are.’ The class joined the teacher in this racist abuse and laughs. I felt numbed by his comments and further felt a pain of embarrassment, self-hatred and shame. I wanted to slip under my desk and melt away. The teacher, oblivious and uncaring, continued with the geography class. This is the psychological damage of racism. It can result in low self-esteem. It can lead to self-hatred. And it problematises our social experiences and cultures.

This is only one side of my story. Another parallel story is that of resilience. Like most of my peers, I failed my CSE exams at 16. I remember the day I collected my results. I was too ashamed to open the letter I received in school and too scared to open it at home. In the end, I opened it at the bus stop and found out I had not achieved a single pass. I cried. My father’s voice rang strong in my ears. I imagined him saying to me, as he had many times:

> I came to this country. I toiled in the factories. I dreamt of a better life for you. I have put food on the table and clothes on your back. I take the misery of racism, of discrimination and abuse at work, so you can have an education.

Like a stuck record my mind played out the sounds of my father’s voice. I eventually braved the journey home and showed my father the results. He was disappointed more than angry and said, ‘You will go back to school to re-take your exam and you will succeed.’

My father had high expectations of me. He was also a feminist - no daughter of his (and he had two) was going to be less than his son. He believed that we had to achieve equally in all that we did. We were taught to ride bikes and to drive cars and we were expected to go to university and hold professional jobs. I was his first-born, so through me, his drive for us to succeed was to be tested. And in this I had no choice. Although my father was a migrant from a peasant, working class background, he held middle class aspirations for us

and insisted that I complete my education. I remember most painfully the day I returned to school after failing my CSEs. I approached the head of sixth form and told him I came to re-take my papers. He laughed and reminded me that I had failed all my exams miserably and should stop wasting *his* time and get a job.

I remembered my father's hope for me and fumed. I knew I could not go back home to face my father with this failure. My heightened emotions, based on my teacher's condescending rejection, made me angry, but assertive in a way I had never been before. I refused to be defeated. Indeed, I became more determined and defiant in my challenge of the head of the sixth form. I enrolled despite his advice – I said to him: "I will re-take and will prove you wrong". A year later, I left school with seven CSE passes; this gave me the qualifications to go on to Further Education.

At college I took A Levels in History, Sociology and Politics. My college experience was very different from my school days. My studies opened my mind in a way that went beyond writing essays and exams. I began to see the world in a different light. Race, gender and class issues were central to my work. In Politics we studied racism and anti-racist movements. We explored political campaigns, such as the Black Sections of the Labour Party and the Civil Rights movements in the USA. My politics teacher would engage with the students. He would refer to the wider socio-political issues that surrounded them. He always insisted we read the daily broadsheet papers and present our understandings in class. He was always interested in our perspectives. I began to feel worthy, visible and valued.

In Sociology we examined how gendered and racialised relations were forms of structural inequality and I began to understand that educational failures were due largely to institutionalised racism. In History I studied communist states under Lenin and Stalin and National Socialism under Hitler. I learnt about class oppressions and inequalities as expressed by other regimes. For me, most importantly, I learnt about the horrors of the Holocaust and appreciated that racism and class exploitation were not just a British BME

experience, but common across other nation states.

My college education thus helped me to view the hurt and damage done to me at school within the bigger picture of the social, political and economic and historical contexts that I lived in. My A level studies made me want to deepen my sociological and political knowledge of racism. I subsequently applied to read Sociology and Politics at Essex University and I achieved the entrance grades and enrolled in the autumn.

My higher education experience was an important time for me, both for my academic and political development. Whilst I enjoyed my degree subjects, I was very disappointed with the lack of 'race' issues on my courses. Consequently, black student colleagues (mainly African Caribbean and Asian) and I complained about how our Sociology degree failed to explore 'race relations' in terms of anti-racist colonial history and discrimination against BME people. We demanded a sociology that was not white and not Eurocentric, a sociology that did not make black people invisible or marginal. We were told the then often heard excuse that tutors lacked expertise in teaching these topics.

Outside the university, black rebellion occurred. In 1981, the inner city streets of London and elsewhere were in flames, and we, as members of the radical BSA (Black Students Alliance) at Essex University, were infused with anger. Equipped academically with the text *The Empire Strikes Back* (CCCS, 1982), we angrily demanded an anti-racist curriculum that welcomed black experience.

Thirty years on, I remember these days very dearly, despite the fact that we did not win any of our demands. But I had used this realisation of the racism in the sociology curriculum to write a critique of the sociology of race and racism for my final year dissertation, for which I received a first. It was, reportedly the finest dissertation for over five years. Almost ten years later I met my BA dissertation supervisor at a British Sociological Association conference. He reminded me of my achievements and, more importantly, said

he had learnt from my dissertation and had subsequently re-vamped a module, which took on board my critique of sociology. This was my achievement.

The student becomes the teacher- an academic rationale

My graduation from Essex led me to begin a Master's degree in Cultural Studies, at Birmingham University's Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS 1982). This was an inspiring period of learning for me, as I became acquainted with the anti-racist and anti-sexist work of S. Hall, P. Gilroy, P. Parmar, J. Solomos, V. Amos, and E. Lawrence. Nonetheless, I became disillusioned with what I perceived as armchair Marxists. On reflection I conflated academic learning with political activism. Anti-racism for me was more than about a detached learning experience; I wanted an educational experience that spoke of praxis and social justice issues; an experience that connected the 'book world' to the real world.

Perhaps my own journey as a lecturer can help explain why I raised these questions. I began my teaching career as a part-time lecturer in a Further Education (FE) college in Wolverhampton. During these early years of teaching, it soon became apparent that the lack of multiculturalism and anti-racism in the curriculum remained an issue on the courses I was teaching. I soon became involved in a campaign for anti-racist education and I joined a grassroot anti-racist campaign group, NAME (National Association for Multicultural Education). This group included teachers, lecturers, students and parents critiquing the curriculum for its Eurocentricity and its lack of multicultural experience and anti-racist approach. It was through doing anti-racism in campaigns that my activism became consolidated.

This was an important juncture in my personal and academic development. It brought together the world of teaching with the world of academic critique. It was with this fusion of being a student and being a lecturer that enabled me to reflect on my learning and build on my teaching. My interest in anti-racist education led me to do a Masters in Education (MEd) at Birmingham

University. Here my academic knowledge of critical race pedagogy and feminist critical education became fused with my grassroots anti-racist activism.

In my position as a college lecturer on the access course (equivalent to A level qualifications that allowed entry to university), I developed a course in sociology that included critical, anti-racist texts from black writers/academics and feminist perspectives. My course inspired student insights and impressed my external examiner. Developing courses was only one aspect of my teaching practise. I also sought to make a difference to the lives of my students, as I believed in the 'myth of education as the great equaliser' (Neito, 1999a: xxi). Given my own experience of growing up in a struggling working class East London family, I thought I knew first hand about inequality. But as my students' lives were often far more difficult than mine, I became aware of the daily and relentless oppression and hardships they faced.

One of the greatest challenges of teaching on the access course was working with black students who had been failed by their prior schooling. The access course was their second chance to educate themselves. The 'race' courses I taught were particularly interesting for many of these black students, who felt that such modules validated their experiences of racism and discrimination and provided a space where they could critique such experiences, whilst increasing their self- esteem and confidence and gaining a sense of empowerment.

Student-centred teaching was imperative for these students and my pedagogical approach often went beyond the normal duty of the teacher, as I did not want these students to fail a second time. One experience that remains vivid in my mind is when an Afro-Caribbean female student on my sociology of race course stopped attending after giving birth to her fourth child. Determined that she did not leave, I contacted her, to be informed that her absenteeism was not due to a lack of motivation or interest, but a lack of childcare. We organised childcare and she completed the course and went on

to university. She is now a teacher at one of our local schools.

This story indicates my continued commitment to anti-racist education during the past twenty-five years. This first teaching experience laid the foundation to my developing belief that the teacher–student relationship is at the core of student self development, success and indeed completion.

Now as a university teacher/educator, I continuously explore how to make my teaching critically challenge race specific oppressions, to more fully acknowledge and value students' inputs and to offer students a multicultural and anti-racist perspective grounded in social justice and hope. In my classes I welcome the varied experiences that students bring. My intention is to open out the classroom debates, so students learn from each other. Sometimes this can be painful, when students have negative views/racist views of others. But sometimes, students are enlightened by the student/teaching exchanges that teach them about *difference* and positive thinking about '*others*'. A teaching that draws on lived experiences is never easy, but necessary, if we are to disrupt the commonsensical views of the world.

This period of my academic life has been pivotal to my current research, to my current academic interests and, indeed, to this PhD. In my first published paper, 'Black students' views of their higher education experiences' (Housee 1990), I explored black students' views of the curriculum, their identity and social experiences and their expectations of higher education at Wolverhampton University. Most importantly, it examined multiculturalism and anti-racism in the higher education curriculum. Although this publication does not form part of the collection for my PhD (because it falls outside the ten years required for submission), I mention it here, because it is fundamental to the background of this critical commentary on BME student voice and experience of higher education.

The study was very limited in that it interviewed a small number of students but it raised some very relevant issues surrounding black experience in higher education. The message was that these students, like I, in my own student

days, wanted to see more discussion of race issues on the degree. In other words, the students were complaining of the lack of black history and black perspective in the curriculum. Furthermore, these students asked for more black staff. And, for some students, pedagogical issues were about inclusive teaching and learning styles that welcomed black experience, and academic and personal support.

This research and the publications that followed are pivotal to this thesis. They have provided me with the background that has brought students' experience of education to the fore and had opened the doors to examining '*what can be done'* to improve our students' lot in higher education. This critical commentary is a continuation of the research into BME experiences of higher education. Moreover, I extend the discussion of student experiences of higher education to include pedagogical issues regarding doing anti-racism as they arose from the classroom teaching.

Concluding thoughts

This section of the critical commentary has explored how my educational experiences have informed my thinking on anti-racism in higher education. It was in the capacity of a teacher/ lecturer that I began to put to practice my anti-racism in education. My research in 1990 on BME students' experiences in a higher education context was pivotal to this search for good practise. In the following sections of the commentary I begin to piece together, through my publications, the importance of anti-racism and discuss the way in which anti-racism praxis is possible in higher education contexts.

In the following section of this commentary I make theoretical observations drawn from Critical Race Theory, Black Feminism and Critical Pedagogy. I attempt to make sense of my publications submitted here through these theoretical frameworks. I offer a reflective evaluation of my publications from 2001 to 2011. Core to the study are issues of racism as experienced by BME students. My interest in my publications has been to examine students' views and counter views of their learning in a teaching and learning context of

higher education. The aim of my publications was to make use of student experiences and classroom dialogues as tools for developing curriculum and teaching methods. This thesis seeks to deepen our knowledge of the way BME students' experiences can be utilised in the work of anti racism in higher education teaching and learning environments. This will be further explored in section four.

Section Two - A statement of the central argument, including analysis of the theoretical and methodological underpinnings

Introduction

This section of the critical commentary is concerned with the ways that Critical Race Theory and Feminism (CRT/F) and Black Feminism and Critical Pedagogy became integral to my examination of racism and anti-racism in higher education in my writings between 2001 and 2011. My publications on student experience and voice suggest that it is necessary to work with and through difference to create and transmit an understanding of racism. They show that students' experiences and their contributions in classroom discussions can form the basis of an emergent critique of racism that is grounded in students' lived day-to-day experiences.

Most importantly, my publications have examined the implications of opening up HE classrooms to discussions of race, racism, sexism and other oppressions that can otherwise be controversial. I present students as critical participant-observers in the work of anti-racism in Higher Education Institutions (hereafter HEIs) and beyond. I argue that dialogue amongst students and with academics/lecturers can form the critique against racism and sexism that can emerge in seminar discussions.

Teaching race and racism is more than issues of curriculum and retention

This section argues that there are a range of practical and theoretical problems with the dominant discourses around the teaching of race and racism in HEIs. The literature on race and racism in HEIs has been largely limited to macro-level discussions around policy issues, such as recruitment,

curriculum development, retention and achievement. Here I first provide a cursory review of the literature.

Teaching race and racism in Higher Education will tell us that a general interest in race and ethnicity in higher education in the UK has grown in recent years, influenced by several factors. A first factor is related to the perception that Britain is now a multicultural society, at least in the sense that its citizens belong to different cultures and ethnic groups, with visible ethnic minorities constituting approximately 8% of the population (Goldberg 1994, and Bunting, 2004). Apart from the empirical observation, what multiculturalism 'means' is, of course debated (Parekh 2000). For Parekh, multicultural society is a society that welcomes many communities. Indeed a peaceful co-existence of diverse communities is to learn how to negotiate through difference. This, Parekh suggests, is to compare and evaluate cultures, with the principle of respect, that doesn't prevent or restrict critical judgement of communities.

For Modood and Werbner (1997), multiculturalism is seen as rootedness within particular cultures. Cross-cultural exchanges are limited it is suggested and exits within some communities and offer particular types of citizenship. For others, and indeed where I stand on this debate, is the view endorsed by Hall (1992), who strongly argues that cultural diversity and multiculturalism signals hybridity, openness and lack of cultural 'boundedness' (Hall 1992). From this view cultural identities are fluid, interchanging and never stagnatory. These debates around what forms, or new forms of multicultural citizenship might mean for social science teaching, are central to questions relating to staffing, the curriculum, assessment, pedagogy and communication more generally.

The second factor is the concern with 'institutional' racism, especially following the Macpherson Inquiry (Macpherson 1999). This inquiry indicated failings in police investigations amounting to pervasive, indirect and direct racism. The recognition of institutional racism in some official bodies has led to acknowledgement that this was likely to exist in other institutional arenas such as higher education (Modood and Connors 2004).

The participation rate of BME groups in HEIs in England was 14.9% in 2003/04 and increased to 18. 9% in 2009/10 (Equality Challenge Unit -ECU 2011:www.ecu.ac.uk/publications/equality-in-he-stats-) Although the entry of large numbers of ethnic minority students into higher education looks at first sight like a 'success story', it is now standard to acknowledge that the entry of ethnic minority students to English HEIs has been highly variable (ECU 2011). In 2011 BME student population although approaching 20% - still remain to be in new universities rather than Russell group ones.

The position of ethnic minority staff is also a good indicator of potential institutional or indirect racism. Although approximately 11% of UK academics are from ethnic minorities (ECU 2011), the majority of these are not British but are recruited from abroad. British-born visible ethnic minority people are seriously under-represented in academic staffing. The Equality Challenge Unit (2011) report confirms that BME staffs are underrepresented in UK universities. For instance, within professorial grades, only 0.4% of black academics are professors, compared to 11% of white academics. There are only 50 black professors and we have only one BME vice-chancellor.

A third factor of relevance in raising the 'profile' of teaching race/ethnicity is the Race Relations (Amendment), Act [RRAA] of 2000; HEIs were required by May 2002 to put in place action plans for racial and ethnic equality. Under the RRAA 2000, higher educational institutions have legal responsibility to eliminate discrimination and to promote equality of opportunity. The Act also requires the promotion of good relations between all ethnic groups (Bindloss 2004). See footnote 1 for recent updates to the Race relations Amendment Act 2000, and the Equality Act 2010.

Fourthly, since the early 1990s there has been a growth in curriculum in matters of 'race', ethnicity, racism, colonialism/post-colonialism, nationalism, migration in the humanities and social sciences (Mason 1996, Law 2003, Murji, 2003). Thus the study and teaching of 'race' and ethnicity has emerged

from a rather narrow, partially ghettoised field to one recognised as of general and wide relevance (see Banton 2003).

However, unlike school-based work on race, there has been relatively little work undertaken on teaching and learning about race and ethnicity in higher education. Although interest in race in higher education grew from the 1990s, much of this research focused on issues of equal opportunity policies (Neal 1998, Leicester 1993); of access to higher education for ethnic minority students (Modood and Shiner 1994; Modood and Acland 1998); and of curriculum issues (Murji 2003 and Law 2003). Bird (1996) Dhanda (2010) and Singh (2011) and have written on the experiences of black students in academia, and Mirza (1992), and others, for example; Housee 2001, 2008; Jones 2001; Marshall 2001, Bhopal 2008, 2009, 2010, have written on the position of ethnic minority women in British higher education.

However, until very recently little UK-based research has been conducted on student experiences and *pedagogical* teaching-based aspects of race and ethnicity in higher education. This differs from the USA, which is characterised both by greater attention to race and ethnic divisions, and a much stronger 'tradition' of identity politics within class- and seminar- rooms. Jacobs' (see Jacobs with Hai 2002) research with 27 higher education teachers of race and ethnicity, conducted between 1996-99, focused more specifically on pedagogical issues and dilemmas. This revealed a good deal of dissension and conflict within seminar rooms teaching race/racism in HEIs, compared with other subject areas. The BSA Race Group carried out a small survey – also in the late 1990s - to ascertain what material on race was taught within sociology, but this material proved somewhat difficult to access (Murji 2003: 504). In 2001, C-SAP funded the *Pedagogie*s research, which culminated in the publication of Pedagogies of Teaching 'Race' and Ethnicity in Higher Education (Jacobs, 2006).

As a member of the C-SAP race research group I was involved in the research interviews of staff from six West Midlands HEI's, which led to two publications, a chapter (2006) in the above mentioned book and a journal

article (2008) included in this PhD by publication. Whist this research was challenging, I argue in this critical commentary and indeed in many of my publications, that more work on student dialogue and seminar interaction on race and racism issues was needed to help rethink and rework practical classroom teaching on racism issues.

The literature on micro-educational processes and staff/student experiences and perceptions of anti-racism refers mainly to school education. These include amongst many, Wright (1986,1992), Mac An Ghaill (1988). Fuller (1984), Mirza (1993), Foster (1990), Troyna (1987), Troyna (1987a), Troyna and Carrington (1990), Bhatti (1999), and Connolly (1998). There is much of value in this literature as it speaks of classroom interaction, of teacher pupil relationships and racism, as they are experienced in secondary school settings. This thesis draws on some of this literature. However, there is often a significant absence in this literature of the student voices that raise and challenge the race debate as it emerges in and outside HEi classrooms.

My publications (Housee 2006, 2010, 2010a, and 2012) have sought to explore other tools and approaches that have provided a critical understanding of student participation in classroom debates and interaction. In these articles and chapters I provide insights that could be used to inform the teaching practice for those of us seeking to educate students in multicultural diverse teaching classrooms.

My writing suggests that social identities can evoke deep emotion for many participants in the pedagogical process; we, as teachers, need to 'manage' student voices so the flow of voices is democratic and non-oppressive. Management here means the creation of what hooks (1994) calls 'safe spaces'. That is, we need to help create teaching environments that allow students to share views on controversial matters in the knowledge that the teacher will keep them all safe. To welcome such sharing is to be prepared for diverse views – which can be a challenge for lecturers. I have found work by Critical Race Theorists and Feminists (CRT/F) and Black Feminism particularly useful in my understanding of racism in education. By centring

BME voice in their research endeavour these theoretical leanings have provided the lenses in which I could explore racism that emerge in the classroom contexts. My publications have made use of these theoretical perspectives and methodological tools that have guided my writing. In the following I will discuss how these theoretical leanings have impacted on my work.

Theoretical and methodological frameworks

Given my concern to understand and to facilitate the discussions with students on issues of diversity and difference in classrooms, my publications have attempted to explore teaching strategies that are conducive to interactive learning methods. In this section I explore how, lecturers/teachers can seize opportunities in the classroom that welcome students' views and experiences. Secondly, in this part of the commentary I look to upgrade our theory and practice around university classroom discussions and debates so that we can further understand teaching controversial issues in HEI classrooms.

On the point of upgrading theory to current issues surrounding racism in education, I first provide a review of the dominant theories on race and racism discussed in the last three decades.

From the late 1960s a proliferation of academic literature around race and racism (see for example Banton, 1967; Rex 1983; Miles 1982; Fryer 1984 and Solomos and Back 1986) had emerged. This literature strongly argued that race is a social construct and not a biological category (Barker 1981 and Miles 1982). The literature suggested that races are ideologically created to justify the process of racialisation, - the process by which races are made - which leads to discrimination and racial inequality. In the mid 1980s, Fryer (1984) described this long history of the equation of 'black' with evil and ugliness and white with purity and beauty. This process of becoming raced - that is, stereotyped, discriminated against and subjugated to subordinate positions

relative to dominant white positions – was part of *racialised* everyday life (Rex 1983; Miles 1982; Cashmore and Troyna 1990).

By the 1990s, the discourses of cultural differences, ethnicities, and diversities (Mac An Ghail 1988, Hall, 1992, 1993 Cohen 1999 and Fenton 1999), dominated sociological discussions around racialised issues and inequalities. Inequalities, during the late Thatcher and the Major years, were said to be much more complex than previously assumed (Rutherford 1990; Rattansi, et al 1992, Rattansi, A. & Westwood, S. (ed.) (1994), and Sarup 1996). Differences were more subjective, particular and fragmented between groups. As Hall (1992, 1993) notes, where once there was talk of black unity, more recently this was disaggregated into Black and Asian groups, and then Christian, Muslim, Sikh, and Hindu or Indian, Pakistani and African communities.

Although social identities have become more complex, than they were previously as these differentiations indicate, the discussions surrounding power issues between different cultural and racial groups are still theorized in relatively simplistic ways (Hall 1992). Hall was first to recognize that any discussion surrounding ethnicity and difference needs to take note of issues of power, where Englishness is valued above the ‘others’ be it African or Indian, and where often, whiteness was equated with the 'normal' and universal vis-à-vis the ‘others’.

From this perspective, whiteness/Englishness is understood as dominant by its contrast with other identities, such as blackness and ‘Muslimness’. The post 9/11 contexts saw a shift to Islam being the new *black* and Islamophobia the *new racism*, making Muslims the new threat to stability and security. Islam for centuries, as Said (1978) reminds us, has been represented as evil and threatening, as backward and barbaric vis-à-vis western civilisations and modernity. This binary juxtaposition between the West and the Rest – or in this case the west and the Islamic world - is the background in which I have made sense of Islamophobia, alongside the rise of Islamacism or Muslim religiosity as an identity figuration for Muslim students.

The sociological point here is that any study of social identity (ies), difference and subjectivity, needs to take into account the relative power positions of diverse communities and internal differentiation within communities. To make sense of why students feel marginalized and dismissed, we must be aware of their socio-political, cultural and economic situation. This is a vital point for my project, because in order for me to comprehend the 'new racisms' that emerge in seminar discussions; I needed to be aware and sensitive to 'difference' in my classrooms. Questions of identity, whether religious, classed, gendered or raced/ethnicised, should be understood within the current discussions of social inequalities generally and specifically with their impact of our now more diverse/ multi-cultural/religious student body. These discussions have provided the conceptual space for understanding identities and differences as more complex, particular and fragmented than previously assumed (Hall 1992, 1993; Sarup 1996). This was important to my understanding of identity issues, I was now able to make sense of religiosity and Islamicism in a university context.

Identity debates around ethnicity and gendered differences in teaching and learning moments were important in my earlier publications (2001 and 2004). Here I suggested that, as lecturers, we should be aware of and draw on student identity and differences of experiences as resources in the learning moment of classroom teaching. To make sense of student identity and experiences as resources I reviewed some of the debates relating to identity formation (Hall, 1992,1993; Sarup 1996; Rattansi & Westwood 1994; Rutherford 1990). The argument put forward here is that we, as teachers, need to have an understanding of the work of subjective interactions to make sense of the processes of identity making and re-making, so that we can then use this understanding of students identity expressions in our teaching exchanges.

In my developing argument for an anti-racist pedagogy I draw on the above debates surrounding identity and apply it to the micro picture of classroom interaction. Moya (2006) suggests that identities can be mobilised in the

teaching process as ways of making sense of students' experiences. Here Moya defines identity as dialectical with two components: ascriptive and subjective identities, which are seen as relational. She suggests that ascriptive identities are like 'social categories' that are often visible – namely - being black, Asian, man, woman, or able bodied. These identities are formed from outside the self, from society, and are implicated in the way the self is treated, be it through direct discrimination or privileges in society. Subjective identity on the other hand refers to 'our sense of self 'our interior existence, our lived experience of being'… (98)

Although subjective identities sometimes feel as if they are completely internal and thus under our individual control, Moya (2006) suggests, they are not. They are inescapably shaped and located within a given time and place. Drawing on my own work I have come to appreciate the interplay between what Moya refers to as an – 'internal subjectivity' – the feeling of being Muslim or being different, presenting itself as 'natural or essential'. Identity association from my observation seems to be a combination of the processes of socialization and enculturisation that takes place in ones private/home sphere of life, which is indeed further complicated by the - ascriptive, - external processes of being 'othered' in public spaces like universities.

In other words we experience *being* and *feeling,* as Muslim, because we are raised and socialised into our Muslim family and community. At the same time our Muslim identity is created as *other*, from external forces, be it media, schooling processes, and other public spaces. Together - through structure and agency -identities are made. This distinction offers an understanding of identity that is realist and not essentialist and has proven helpful to my understanding of student experiences in our fluid and changing social world.

Given that some of my publications (2001, 2008, and 2011) have suggested that identities matter in teaching and learning moments, Moya's distinction between ascriptive and subjective identities is useful in exploring identities in the classroom contexts. Identities are salient; they make the classroom a different place for different students, as students with different identities within

the same classroom will experience and respond differently to the learning moment. Moya's (2006) theorising allowed me to explore anti-racism in education in ways that consider students' multiple subjective positionalities, which in turn inform my developing pedagogy of anti-racism.

So far I have explored some of the literature on racialised identities and how these theoretical contributions have helped me understand identities as articulated in the micro picture of the classroom situation. This was important if I was to make sense of student experiences and critique in the pedagogical process. This is central for my work on islamophobia in a higher education context. These are further discussed in the following section on multicultural and anti racist education in Britain.

Anti-racism in education: one-step forward and two steps back

Before I turn to the theories that have influenced my discussions of anti racism in education I want to consider the limits of the existing literature. I review multicultural and anti-racist policies in education. The argument is that our practice needs to move beyond the current impasse between these positions. I present an argument that endorses Black feminism, Critical Race Theory and Feminism as ways forward.

The discourse of Multicultural Education (MCE) in the British context centres upon the recognition and promotion of ethnicity as the vehicle for promoting a harmonious, democratic, culturally plural society (Mullard 1985, and Troyna 1987). It reached its maturity in the influential Swann Report in 1985, when it became clear to anti-racists that celebrating difference in classrooms with curricular changes did not go far enough. MCE was criticised for its apparent overemphasis on cultural diversity as an end in itself. There was little emphasis on structural racism, discrimination and community experiences. Writers such as Troyna, (1987); and Sarup, (1986); argued that there was little evidence to suggest that 'culture contact' between host community and minorities would eradicate racial prejudice by itself.

These criticisms of MCE were a prelude to the development of the anti-racist educational approach (ARE). Central to this approach were the beliefs that racism was endemic in economic, social and political structures of society. As such, racism could not simply be educated away; there was a need to address the bigger picture of structural inequalities in education. This required analysis of teacher pupil interactions, assessment regimes and recruitment and equal opportunity policies (Troyna 1987a, 1987, Mac An Ghail 1988, 1999; Gillborn 1990, 1995).

Developments found in the ARE were important, however, critics of ARE soon emerged (Troyna and Williams 1986; Troyna and Carrington1990; Gillborn 1990, 1995 and 1996). These critiques identified its lack of class in ARE analysis of race to make sense of educational inequalities. Second, there was a concern that ARE's approach of centering a particular version of racism, the black–white understanding of racism, was inadequate in explaining the *new racisms* that were emerging in *new times* (Donald and Rattansi 1993; Hall1992). There was a need to explain the multiple racial differences and experiences of education. ARE and MCE were both seen to be ill equipped to respond to the 'new racisms' of the twenty-first century.

Here there seems to be a theoretical impasse with regards to theorising new racialised and culturally/religiously specific situations of students and pupils. I have argued in my publications (2006, 2010, 2010a, 2012), as have others, (Conway 1997; IRR 2010; Fekete 2006), that Islamophobia should be analysed as a '*new racism'* (Barker 1981) based both on perceived skin colour and religious and cultural differences. It is most important that we analyse group-based identities, for example, Muslim identity, and not write them off as simply essentialist. This is central to my understanding of anti-Muslim racism in higher education.

I claim in this critical commentary that the situation for BME students in UK HEIs requires an anti-racist pedagogy that uses student-centred learning methods, which invites student voice in classrooms in ways that welcome expression of racialised experiences. First, however, I explore processes of

theorising the nuances of classroom exchanges on race and racism. I turn to Critical Race Theory/Feminism and Black Feminism because these perspectives have offered an analysis that centers black experience.

Critical Race Theory /Feminism and Black Feminism: some theoretical and pedagogical issues

In this part of section two of the critical commentary I show how I have made use of Critical Race Theory and Feminism (CRT/F) and Black Feminism in my publications. My publications suggest that a teaching approach that addresses issues of cultural difference and ethnicity and allows for the specificity of the various racism(s), as they arise in HEI classroom discussions, are essential for teaching and learning against racism. Such an approach, I claim, allows for deeper understanding of racialised differences and experiences of racism, which is necessary if we are then to critique racism from classroom discussions.

CRT/F and Black feminism have guided my research on anti-racism in education. A central premise of CRT is that racism is endemic in society; it is normal and part of everyday life (Bell 1992; Dixson and Rousseau 2005; Delgado 1995, Delgado, & Stefancic J 2001). CRT emerged out of these theorists' frustration with the slow pace of change from the Civil Rights movement of the 1950s through to today. It was argued that, despite the Civil Rights Act 1964 and equal opportunities policies, that followed, inequalities for Blacks in America continued.

Delgado and Stefancic (2001) present a convincing argument as to why racism and racial inequality continue today. They suggest that unlike idealists – who argue that racism and discrimination are 'matters of thinking, mental categorization, attitude and discourse' (2001:17), they affirm that although race is a social and not a biological construct, experience of race is real when black folks continue to be discriminated against in the job market, educational institutions, the criminal justice system and elsewhere. Racial hierarchy, Delgado and Stefancic (2001) argue, determines who gets tangible benefits in

society, including the best jobs, the best schools (2001:17), for this reason then, Delgado and Stefancic (2001) argue that, for the realist:

> ‘diversity seminars, and increasing representation of black, brown and Asian …” [are not enough]… both forces, material and cultural, operating together and synergizing each other, [need to be considered] so that race reformers work …contribute to a holistic project of racial redemption’ (20-21).

My writing endorses CRT’s suggestion that we campaign to expose racism legally through political activities but we also critique racism educationally. I am attracted to CRT, because it works to name the daily racism faced by BME folks and discusses how racism continues to privilege whiteness. It positions race at the centre of its analysis and suggests that these powerful realities structure people’s lives.

An understanding of whiteness as privilege was important to my analysis. As hooks explains, ‘in the black imagination whiteness is a form of ‘terror’ that haunts all black people, regardless of their class position or politics’ (1997:175) In this sense, whiteness is privilege and centred and blackness is marginalised. In the work of anti-racism in education, Leonardo (2002) suggests, we problematise whiteness because as he says here:

> ‘White students do not disinvest in whiteness by claiming ‘I’m not white’, …whites believe they are individuals and not a racial group…white power is efficiently maintained through strategies of invisibility (2002:45).

To undo the racism that seeps through whiteness, Leonardo (2002) says that educationalists need to de-centre whiteness and replace it with, what he calls - non-white discourse, or what I call - black perspectives. To critique racism, is not simply about a critique of white people, but about the privileges that white culture and whiteness brings. Acknowledging this requires the interrogation of whiteness by centring and sometimes privileging blackness.

One way of doing this is welcome the voiceless of minorities. Mohanty (1990) was one of the first to use 'voice and voiceless' in the education context. CRT has taken this further and centred the notion of voicelessness to capture classroom silence and invisibility. CRT promotes the voice of 'people of color' referred to as counter-narratives. This is an important concept for an understanding of classroom discourse on race issues. Ladson-Billings (1998) one of the first to use CRT in educational issues, claims that storytelling or naming ones own reality, provides for the 'psychic preservation of marginalized groups' that internalize white condemnation' (1998:14). Story telling provides other ways of knowing and seeing. CRT is about learning to listen to other people's counter-stories and finding ways to make them matter within the education system and within educational research.

In the last decade CRT has benefited from black feminist research and theory. This development saw the birth of Critical Race Feminists (CRF). CRF are multi-disciplinary scholars bringing together different strands of feminist theoretical scholarship. CRF affirms the multiple location and identities that Black women (BME) inhabit. In this sense CRF, as suggested, by Wing (2000) is a feminist intervention that is sees …'women of color possess(ing) a cluster of identities' (2000:7). Central to CRF is their intersectionality analysis, which, as Crenshaw suggests, pertains to:

> … the ways in which the location of women of colour at the intersection of race and gender makes our actual experience of domestic violence, rape …different to white women (Crenshaw 1993: in Yuval-Davis 2006:198).

With reference to CRF and educational issues, Wing and Smith (2006) have recently analysed the French law that prohibits Muslim girls from wearing headscarves in schools from a CRF perspective. Their analysis from a multi-disciplinary perspective brings together different strands of feminist theoretical scholarship that provides a more rounded picture of minoritised issues

generally and particularly in relation to education. Here minority rights of wearing headscarf in school were juxtaposed with universal rights – imposing school uniform for all.

British feminists have also used intersectional analysis in order to separate the different levels of gender, race, class, culture and indeed religious oppressions (see Anthias and Yuval-Davis 1992, and Yuval-Davis 2002, 2006 Phoenix 2000, Brah and Phoenix 2004). Dhanda (2008), for example, has explored Islamic feminist discourse on women's rights to wear or not to wear the veil. In her discussion, she argues that 'to live peacefully with difference' we need to avoid the polarity of banning versus rights. Dhanda insists we must 'engage and learn' and above all, we must 'refrain from making charges of backwardness of those that are different' (2008:56). My work has also claimed that one way of advancing our views on difference is 'to engage and learn'. The above feminist analyses, together with CRT/F analysis, have informed my writings on Islamophobia in educational contexts. This critical commentary draws on my study and publications as it seeks to identify racialised issues in a HEI context.

In Britain, we are now beginning to see CRT scholarship namely from Gillborn (2006, 2005, 2009), the C-SAP Critical Race Theory group –includes; Housee, Pilkington and Hylton (2009) and with their recent C-SAP monograph publication on CRT in Britain and the USA in Pilkington, Warmington and Housee (2011), and most recently, a special edition of the Race Ethnicity and Education journal dedicated to CRT in England, (eds) Chakrabarty, Roberts and Preston (2012), founders of the Critical Race Theory discussion Group, all arguing that CRT insights are relevant for analysing recent education policy trends and continued inequalities of minorities in England.

Journeying to find the most appropriate theoretical frameworks for my research had led me to CRT/F and Black Feminism, these were very important interventions because they provided me with legitimate lens from which I could cut through the impasse of the MCE and ARE developments in England. In my view critical anti-racism in education seemed to have vanished

in the literature since the 1990's, and new developments seemed to come from CRT/F and Black Feminism. In the following I draw on some of the literature that has informed my PhD publications.

Black feminism and doing interpretive research...

A second strand of theoretical thinking in my work comes from a Black feminism that privileges black experiences when *doing* research. Black feminists intellectuals, (Feminist Review 1984; Garby 1982; Parmar 1990; Brah 1996; Mirza 1992; Hill-Collins1991; hooks 1984, 1994 and Kum-Kum Bhavanani 2000), use examples of lived experiences like working in factories, organising communities, mothering and other domestic issues and experiences in education to develop their theorising and written scholarship.

The emergence of Black women writers - both in the U.K and the U.S. is testimony of this shift. Black women have created institutional locations where they produce specialised thought. In other words, Black women have produced knowledge claims that contest those of mainstream academia. This can be evidenced by the proliferation of academic texts and novels written by black women in the last three decades; Bryan, Dadzie, and Scafe (1985), Davies, (1981,1984) and (1990), Hill-Collins (1990), hooks (1982)*, and (*1984*)*, and *Feminist Review* 1984 vol. 17, to name a few.

BME/Black women, it's argued, (Hill-Collins, 1990; hooks, 1982, and 1984) will have special knowledge by virtue of their marginalised status in society, hence their lived experiences, from a particular socially situated perspective, can lay a claim that forms their standpoint. For Hill-Collins (1990), Black feminist epistemology stems from the desire to understand the position of Black women and their experience of double subjectivity, of race and gender. This positionality argues Hill-Collins (1990) presents black women as "outsiders within'; this is a very important concept for my research as a black female lecturer. The ability to be both inside and outside, of those they research in the academy, such that they understand both. This positionality argues Hill-Collins (1990) enables a process of self-actualisation, whereby the

Black woman as researcher or researched is and active subject, thus counteracting the trend of pathologisation and dehumanisation in academic research (Feminist Review 1984).

As a black female researcher/lecturer, I am aware of the double position of being a member of the staffing body at my institution and 'sharing' a marginalised minority position with the students. I am - an ‘outsider within’ this can lead to the difficulties of trying to 'both step out of and also draw on one's own' subjective awareness of the social, economic and indeed racialised or religious subordination in a western society. For this reason the concept of 'outsiders within' has helped me form a Black feminist standpoint dedicated to raising the political consciousness of BME students by introducing a critical race and feminist critique to the teaching and learning situation. As black/Asian female lecturers and students, we see the world from certain ‘outsiders-within’ perspectives and ask questions that are specific and relevant to our lives. My research has welcomed these *other ways* of knowing from the perspectives of BME student experiences.

Black feminism in education, as an alternative epistemology, has been important to my developing argument that endorses black experience as acceptable knowledge. Black Feminist standpoint challenges not only the content of what currently passes for truth but simultaneously challenges the process by which the truth was derived. It does so by, as Hill-Collins (1990) says, rejecting the concept of education as value-free and instead demanding an embrace of a pedagogy that engages the marginalized from which knowledge is gained.

Endorsing such 'situatedness' and voice/experiences, as the foundation of reality and knowledge rejects the elitism of academic thinking by presenting alternative, often silenced views from the margins and bringing them to the centre (hooks 1984). This standpoint validates knowledge claims from the voiceless, by making experiential knowledge a criterion for determining meaning. This empowers those whose experiences have not been central but marginalized. Black feminist standpoint is especially relevant in educational

research and theory because it invites biographical narratives from BME peoples experience in education that offer not only a ‘story’ but many stories from ‘other voices’ that de-pathologies black experience.

In wanting to privilege BME students’ experience in my writing, I endorsed the methodology proposed (above) by Black Feminism and CRT/F. CRT/F uses critical race methodologies that contextualizes black experience; it strategically uses multiple methods, often unconventional and creative, to draw on the knowledge of black people, through ‘family histories, biographies, scenarios…narratives, and by other means’ (Solorzano and Yoso, 133:2009), to capture these experiences in the construction of knowledge. In my publications I have explored those specific raced stories because I wanted to explore the deeper meaningful experiences of BME educational life in a higher education context.

Methods of collecting data…let it grow

Just as my PhD by publications was developmental, so indeed were my methodological considerations. In that sense my methods of collecting data were grounded and responded to the different research situations and needs as they arise. I used methods of grounded theory as discussed by Glaser (1992), Strauss and Corbin (1998) and developed by Charmaz (2000). Grounded theory is a qualitative research methodology that seeks to inductively distil issues of importance to specific groups of people by creating meaning through analysis (Glaser, 1992 Strauss and Corbin 1997). Issues of importance emerge from the stories of the participants. Grounded theory uses an interpretive framework which welcomes talking with students, entails watching and listening in educational environments, this method together with a Black Feminism, was for me the most appropriate way of collecting qualitative data on racism in education.

My publications have made use of various research methods; in three of my publications (2006, 2010 and 2012) my material was drawn from classroom observation and interaction. I made notes during seminars and also during

post class reflective diary writing. The journal write-ups form the material for these three publications on classroom interactions and dialogue. I am also in the habit of asking students to voluntarily leave the group notes for me to observe. This is particularly useful for evaluation purposes but most importantly for acknowledging the voiceless in class.

My 2010a publication is one such example of listening to the silenced. The data in this study is drawn from my observation and conversation with seven Asian female students - six Muslim and one Sikh, who remained in the classroom at the end of lesson. As they spoke I took notes I also continued to take notes immediately after this exchange. I acknowledged that my notes were *my* interpretation of the discussion; so I invited them to put their comments and thoughts in writing, in an e-mail comment and or on anonymous evaluation forms.

I have found e-mail conversations, particularly useful for those students who are silent in class. I often invite students to share their thoughts on the teaching themes via email or anonymous hard copy mail sent to my university address. This technique is used in three of my publications (2010a, 2011, 2011a and 2012). The information gathered via e-mail and conventional mail presents an opportunity to recuperate what had been unspoken and would otherwise have been unheard. This method is significant in unlocking some of the social experiences of ‘silenced BME students’.

The study for my chapters in 2001 and 2004 began with an after class teaching moment when the class group continued discussions about the teaching topic. Follow up meetings were organized inviting students to focus group meeting. Issues were organically developed from these meeting. The discussions were tape recorded and transcribed. A further follow up meeting invited the same students to one-to-one interviews with open-ended questionnaires.

The publications 2008, 2011 also used one-to-one semi-structured interviews as my principal method of investigation. These interviews lasted between

forty-five and eighty minutes and were taped. The 2008 study were interviews with six lecturers teaching sociology in Universities in the West Midlands. This study was part of a larger C-SAP project on teaching race and racism in Sociology degrees.

The 2011 publication draws on interviews with twenty-three BME students from two of my sociology modules during the academic year 2010. I bear in mind that the views and discussions arising from the interviews are a small sample of ethnic minority students at the university. The interviews were arranged through formal channels (e-mailing students from module lists) and informal methods (approaching students at the end of class). I am conscious that these students may have accepted my invitation to interview because of their familiarity and commitment to the lecturer and issues raised in the project.

I am also mindful that being their tutor may affect the authenticity of their answers. Some students may have answered the questions according to what they thought I wanted to hear, rather than what they really thought or felt. I balance this with the fact that some students may actually be more honest in their comments, because they felt more comfortable sharing their views with a researcher from a BME background. This tension between the search for authenticity and impartiality is an unresolved and recurrent research dilemma for me.

I further acknowledge that when a lecturer interviews her students we must also take into account power issues. I was very mindful of the students right to decline participation in this research. I presented them with an ethics form which invited them to participate but allowed them to decline and end participation at any point of the interview. All respondents were asked for written consent on forms giving permission for their interview material to be used for academic research purposes. All interviews and commentaries were anonymous, and all participants were given the opportunity to withdraw from participating at any given point of the research.

The joint article by Housee and Richards (2011a) is a publication based on the experiences of two BME female academics. This was a reflective and biographical discussion drawing on our lives with specific references to our schooling/educational experiences. We made use of an 'in-conversation' method of data collection between the researchers. Through the one-to-one e-mail exchanges, and the 'chat facility' of face book, which permits immediate response, we had this self-determined space within which each of us could use for reflection and thought. This gave the opportunity for interactive conversation, whilst also permitting moments for clarification. These e-mail and face-book conversations provided print material from the conversation that could then be accessed and evaluated easily. My research sought to develop a Black Feminist standpoint as discussed above from which to conduct research on BME Students and lecturers. The topics of discussion were themed as they organically developed.

This section has outlined the theoretical influences that have informed my publications. Black Feminism and Critical Race Theory /Feminism have given me the lens to analyse gender identity with ethnicity, which incorporates new ethnicities thesis discussed by Hall (1992) above. I was now able to make sense of student expression of Muslim/Islamic identities (and other identities) - as they were articulated in educational contexts. CRT/F has provided me with the tools for understanding the importance of student voice in educational context and how such voices can be used in the making of anti-racism in a university context. In this marriage of CRT/F and black feminism I was able to make greater sense of my publications on Islamophobia and student identity articulation in classroom teaching. In conclusion I argue that the theoretical insights in this section have enabled me to explore racism and sexism that have emerged in HEI settings.

Section three: A Context of the Published Works: the publication together put forward

In this section of the critical commentary, I develop an argument for a pedagogy for anti-racism. I build on the theoretical developments that I have raised in the previous section in order to foreground identity and experience for a pedagogy for anti-racism. The claim being made here is that anti-racist and feminist theories and methodologies used in higher educational contexts need to work with and through difference. By fusing Critical Race Theory/Feminism (CRT/F) with Black Feminism, I propose a way of teaching against racism that uses real lived student and lecturers experiences as they emerge in the classroom teaching and learning contexts. I use these in order to explore ways in which the teaching moment can open out spaces for anti-racist pedagogy that are inclusive of diversity and difference.

This section begins by considering student and lecturer identities and experiences in the learning and teaching process these discussions are developed in five of my publications. Three of these (Housee 2001, 2004, and 2011) speak to student experiences and their commentary on identity positioning in a university context. Two further articles included here Housee (2008); and Housee with Richards (2011a), discuss lecturer identity and positionality. The remaining four publications submitted are on pedagogical issues for students and lecturers (Housee 2006, 2010, 2010a and 2012). In this first half of section three, I explore the role of identity and experience in a higher education.

Identity/ies in the higher educational context

Teaching in a higher education context (Wolverhampton University) with a sizeable (30%) BME student body has provoked me to think about student and teacher identity and positionality. My publications have explored the ways in which racialisation and religious identities and differences are played out in politically significant ways in and outside the HE classroom today. First, I

explore the role of identity in a higher education context. Identities according to Hall (1992) discussed in section two, are relational, complex, contradictory, fluid and constantly repositioned. This is particularly important to the classrooms that provide a reflection on the milieu of our diverse society today.

BME students in my publications have said that the more multicultural their classes are, the more comfortable they feel in the university context and the more they want to participate and learn. This highlights the importance of being part of a critical mass, part of a sufficient number of minority groups that makes the university a supportive community (Hussian and Bagguley, 2007)

My publications have, in part, sought to explore how BME students' identities and experiences in the university space can help us understand how identities on campus inform the teaching spaces and, concomitantly, how these spaces inform identity configuration and articulations. A challenge for doing anti-racist pedagogy is to work with these students' varied and sometimes contradictory understandings of identity *differences.* Sometimes, BME students speak of their 'commonalities' and at other times they speak of their 'differences' (Bhopal 2010). In my first publication (2001) submitted here, I explored BME students' discussions about identities and their commonality with other minorities. The following comment indicates how one such BME student felt a sense of unity across differences:

> I feel that the Caribbean/African and Asian mix is good here. We do sometimes see ourselves as a wider black contingent. The integration between the black group, Asian and Caribbean/African, is close (2001: 88).

Another BME student referred to *black* identity as being important for feeling confident in a white institution:

> When we first started here as first years, all the BME students got together and gained strength from our shared identity. This

> initial black support was important for our confidence in a white institution (2001:89).

This unity in diversity, based on difference vis-à-vis whiteness, was an important factor in my 2001 publication, which showed how commonality was a basis for solidarity against racism.

My chapter three years later (2004) began to show signs of greater fragmentation of identities. Indeed in my publications thereafter 2006, 2010, 2010a, and 2011, it was noticable that students more readily expressed their cultural and religious differences. Clearly, something had changed. A 'New World Order' (Fekete 2006; IRR, 2010) was emerging in what is often referred to as a post 9/11 moment. This was a moment, where the west presented itself as civilised and the Orient (Said, 1978), in this case, Muslim countries, as backward, barbaric and uncivilised, formed the background to some of the identity associations and expressions on our campus.

Islamophobia - the racist vilification against Muslim people and the resistance to this racism, has been understood through religiosity and the rise to of Islamisation and the affirmation of Muslim identification (Said, 1981;Modood, 2004; Abass 2007). In Britain, such racism has been symbolised by the aftermath of 9/11, the 7/7 London suicide attacks, the Prevention of Terrorism Act (2005) and increased police powers for stop and search since, and, indeed, the War on Terror (ists). It is in this context that Islamophobia as the *new racism* (Conway, 1997; Poole, 2000) began to figure in popular culture and mainstream media—and unsurprsingly, Islamophobia was a theme that developed from the student voices in my in –class and out of class debates.

At this juncture of my writing (2004), Islam and other expressions of religiosity are noted in my class, as said by this Muslim student:

> Knowing about my religion has informed my identity. I now know that being a Muslim adds to the differences articulated by ‘race’, nationality, class and other social differences (2004: 64).

A Sikh student said:

> I am Sikh and proud of it, but I am also British Asian. I like to fit in with the wider (British) community, but I also like to feel part of my culture, know my roots (2004: 64).

My questions on identity was open, there was no intention on my part to explore religion or faith, as a criterion for identity expression, however, as the above two quotations show, religious identity clearly becomes important to students' experiences in a post 9/11 period.

My work claims that engaged dialogue between students can be the space for challenging the new racism. Questions for me were whether the new racism of Islamophobia had sharpened these particularities in identity expressions among BME students and, more importantly, whether these differences had heightened the racism experienced across BME and other minoritised (marginalised) students.

For some students the post 9/11 contexts had exacerbated cultural differences. Note in this extract how Islamophobic racism makes this Muslim student feel like an outsider:

> September 11 has really opened my eyes. As a child I thought I was British. Recently, I overheard a conversation about the recent attacks on the twin towers and how the Quran encourages such violence. I was furious and stood up and challenged their ignorance. This incident made me feel that [because] I am different, I’m not seen as British and [am] a target for racists (2004: 64).

Clearly, as suggested above, Islamophobia had made this student feel alienated and not part of ‘British’ culture. Alienation for some students led to a search for being with ‘one’s own’. Islam for these students became a source of strength. For those who were non-Muslim, differences were leading to what the following Muslim student describes as ‘disassociation and disunity’:

> I’ve noticed that since September 11, many of my Asian friends, who are not Muslim, have, began to disassociate themselves with the inclusive term Asian. They now define themselves as Hindu and Sikh. I think the conflict and the disunity between Asians is a direct result of September 11 (2004:68).

For this Muslim student, the disunity was serious enough to break up the possibility of a unity against racism. Sadly, this student also suggests that such a ‘break up’ meant that fragmentation left some minorities more vulnerable than others. She added:

> Once non-whites united under one banner -‘ black’. At least then we looked united. Now our enemies are not only the anti-Muslim racists, but, also those (Asians/blacks) who wish to disassociate from us Muslims, making us a more vulnerable group (2004:68).

Given the importance of alliances against racism, I was interested to explore whether diversity and differences can still permit alliances amongst minoritised groups against racism. I noted in 2004 that some students were concerned about segregation on campus and feared that religion and cultural differences, when expressed in communal ways, could lead to conflict and racism. For the following student, for example, religious identity was leading to a rejection of cultural diversity:

> I don’t like the cultural divide that exists on campus. We hear students say, 'Sikhs are like this, they go off with Muslim girls and Muslim boys use Sikh girl, and whites are like this and that.' I hate this divisiveness. I want to see more integration (2004:65).

None-the-less, for many students in my studies, university spaces continue to be places where one's prejudices can be challenged, as said here by this Sikh student:

> University has made me more open-minded. As an Asian kid, you're brought up quite prejudiced, racist, into your own community. My parents were into caste and against mix relationships of any type, white, blacks and other religious groups. I no longer have a strong Asian Sikh identity (2004:64).

University spaces (at least in a post 1992 institution like Wolverhampton University where this research took place) are one of the few spaces where varied communities come to study. My intention in this critical commentary is to explore how best teaching and learning spaces can be utilised in the work of anti-racism. Comments from students in my publications have shown that university spaces remain places where diversity is welcomed and anti-racism in classes can be worked on through difference.

This exchange is clearly a consequence of proximity and meeting in university spaces. Students can challenge their prior understandings of other minority religious groups. The attempt to capture the lived experiences of the students meant exploring the intersections of those experiences. Social divisions and identities are interrelated in complex ways around *structure, culture* and *agency* (Brah, 1996). Intersectionality (elaborated in section two) has been particularly important to my understanding of how students in my publications have understood current debates on gender and racialised/Islamophic positionalities. It is only by taking into account the intersectionality (Brah & Pheonix 2004, Crenshaw, 2003 and Wing and Smith 2006) between gender, class and religious differences, that I could make sense of my students' negotiated identities.

Where differences are to be respected in university spaces, commonality is also sought in the making of alliances against racism (Bhopal 2010). Indeed,

commonality between BME staff and students in university spaces is considered to be a source of empowerment for marginalised groups. Affinities based on minoritised cultures/religious, racialised and gendered differences are central to the ‘outsider-within’ alliances. The joint publication, Housee and Richards (2011), is an example of the affinities of two BME female lecturers finding support in the academy through what Hill-Collins calls ‘othermothering’ connections, which re-define mentoring in a way that draws on 'the mutuality of a shared sisterhood that binds [BME] women as community othermothers' (Hill-Collins 1991:131).

It was through such ‘outsider-within’ relationships between a BME female lecturer and BME students (as noted in both Housee 2001 and 2011a) that I was able to work with and respond to student needs as they came up.

BME students’ experiences of failure, and despondence, success and achievement allowed for an understanding of the power of education for ‘transgressions’ (hooks, 1994). hooks claims that teaching students to transgress racial, sexual, and class boundaries is about education for confidence, for empowerment and freeing minds for critical thinking. It is this relationship within the institution that empowers BME students.

The ‘outsider-within’ (discussed fully in section two) shared affinity between BME students and staff can be seen as a potential support mechanism that cushion the alienation that BME students may experience in HEi spaces. Such solidarity between BME students and BME lecturers has to be worked on in order for affinity to be established as I discuss in Housee (2001, 2008 and 2010).

My publications indicate that students seek out lecturers that they feel they can trust on gendered and raced issues. My 2010 article, for example, is particularly important for raising the issue of BME student-lecturer affinity in *safe zones*. It refers to a spontaneous gathering at the end of a teaching session of six Muslim and one Sikh female student that explored the

implications of having separate Muslim/faith schools. Our shared raced and gendered identities had given them the confidence to approach me. These students voluntarily shared their views and experiences on Islam and veil wearing in a space outside class where they felt safe to do so. The post-class discussion threw up insights into the reasons for student ‘silences’ in class.

I note in this publication that sometimes the silence in the class can be both a consequence of oppression and a form of resistance. That is, some BME students refused to speak, because they felt exposed and did not want to be seen as a *showcase* for racism. Others felt intimidated and vulnerable and did not have the confidence to speak in class. This publication notes that affinity between students and lecturer had created safe zones that permitted the recovery of ‘voice’ that the formal class spaces did not. On this occasion, I too found confidence in voicing my personal views with these students on the hijaab, which I would not readily share in a formal class discussion, for fear of offending some students.

The issue of BME staff and students in university spaces is important when considering empowerment for marginalised groups. However, an equally important issue for me, in the work of anti-racist pedagogy in university spaces, is the politics of anti-racism. What I mean by this is that the teaching of racism should not be measured by the teachers/lecturer's skin, religious, gender or, indeed, cultural background, but by their anti-racist practice. Whiteness should not be judged simply by the embodiment of white people, as discussed in section two, but the praxis of white lecturers in the work of anti-racism. This is well documented in my study for C-SAP, (2008) which compared the experiences of six lecturers, a mix of a white male, a black male, two white females and two Asian females from universities in the West Midlands. This study (2008) raised some interesting points regarding ethnicity and identity in teaching.

The BME lecturers’ experiences in this study mirrored my own. This Asian female lecturer said:

> I came out of an age where Asians, along with most ethnic minorities, saw each other as black. Being black for me means I look at Africa and other black experience with equal importance in my teaching (2008:422).

A black male lecturer said:

> Being black can help. I can say what a white lecturer cannot. I remember saying to black students, 'Let's talk about racism' and suggesting how racism has caused problems for us and messes us up; I am not sure a white lecturer would be at ease with asking such a question (2008:425).

For the white lecturers their anti-racist politics fore grounded their practice. Despite the fact that the white lecturers had experienced difficulties in the classroom, they were clear about their political commitments and saw it as their *job* to provide an educational experience that challenged students to unlearn racism. The following from a white female lecturer demonstrates this:

> Some black students felt that white lecturers were their enemies. My presence tremendously challenges them. I would enter the classroom for a battle and often won. As a white person, I have a different perspective to black experience. My whiteness does not create any difficulties. I feel passionately about issues of 'race' and racism (2008:424).

Clearly, identity did matter for students as well as lecturers. As this quote suggests, sometimes white lecturers are seen as an enemy. It is pertinent that the teaching challenges this through the critical anti-racist practice that white lecturers can bring to class. As Wagner says here:

> There are benefits in White Lecturers teaching 'race' and racism from an anti-racist perspective, [because] [s]tudents' will be

> exposed to a White anti-racist individual, who may challenge white students to take the issue of racism seriously, reinforcing that the issue is not solely a concern for people of colour (2005: 271-72).

When both BME and white lecturers teach against racism, it helps to dispel the idea that only Blacks can or, indeed, should teach on race issues. Whilst shared BME experience and affinity is, of course, important for BME students as my 2008 publication indicates, the yardstick for teaching 'race' and racism is not the lecturer's cultural location or skin colour, but their anti racist teaching practise and their de-construction and problematising of whitearchy (that is, white privilege and hierarchy (Leonardo 2002, Back, 2004).

My writing makes a distinction between whiteness expressed as individual prejudice and whiteness expressed as institutionalised racism. In both cases, though, whiteness is a marker of power in relationship to blackness. Levine-Rasky (2000) notes that this kind of understanding of whiteness refocuses:

> discussions from the 'them and us' to whiteness itself. From this perspective the task involves a rigorous, critical problematisation of whiteness as the active participant in systems of domination (2000: 272).

Levine-Rasky offers an analysis of whiteness or white dominance that goes beyond the person, to an understanding of structures and processes. Marking whiteness as 'whitearchy' as I suggest in Housee (2008), is about recognising its ideological, socio-economic and political history and about acknowledging Eurocentric racisms. In an HEi setting this means, as Back (2004) suggests here, that white intellectuals must engage with and challenge their own racism and that of their colleagues and institutions:

> What I want is to acknowledge that racism has damaged reason, damaged academic and civic freedoms and damaged the project of education itself. Admitting this means pursuing a kind of

> resolute and ongoing reckoning with whiteness, it is an ongoing questioning that strives to step out of whiteness' brilliant shadow (2004: 5).

Back adds that this process 'should be troublesome and uncomfortable' and driven by shame rather than guilt—that is, it should be the responsibility of white (and BME) folks to *undo* racism in everyday (teaching) circumstances. The key question is the *politics* and reflexivity of ones pedagogy, not the colour of ones skin. The use of critical pedagogical teaching strategies that question patriarchy and whitearchy is what should be applied (Leonardo 2002).

Having placed student and staff identity at the centre of this study, it thus became necessary for me to focus on experience and voice in the pedagogic processes. Core to some of my publications has been the examination of classroom-based discussions about racism and how such debates can be dispelled and critiqued in the classroom. Below I discuss the nuances of classroom interaction and engagements as I observed in my publications (2006, 2010 and 2012). As suggested above, it is critical teaching that counts in the work of anti-racism in the classroom.

Critical Pedagogy strategies for undoing racism in the HE classroom

This section suggests insights into re-thinking pedagogic strategies so that students can more fully participate in the teaching and learning moments. I discuss the way in which, based on my experiences, tutors can utilise classroom exchanges/interactions and facilitate a learning experience that critically explores racism. The lecturer in this situation can provide a space in the classroom for students to develop critical ways of learning, as well as relational skills enabling discussion amongst people who are *different* from each other.

Radical educators (see Freire, Apple, Young, Bowles and Gintis, Gramsci, Marcuse, Williams, Bourdieu in Dale et al 1976) have long argued that classrooms are not mere sites of instruction. They are also political and cultural sites that represent both contestation and accommodation to knowledge. In this sense therefore, as Mohanty suggests here, ‘ teachers and students produce, reinforce, create, resist, and transform ideas about race, gender, and difference in the classroom’ (Mohanty 89/90:183). In search of how anti-racism can be done in the teaching and learning context, my work argues that one way of challenging racism is to start where racism(s) lives, in other words, to speak with and to students about their experiences.

This is not a novel idea; Freire (1970) was one of the first to argue that educators have to work with the experiences that students bring to their educational institutions, he argues for pedagogical principles that arise from concrete practices and everyday experiences. This suggests that we take seriously the cultural capital of the oppressed. I have made use of a Freirean analysis to draw out student experiences in the making of knowledge. Critical Pedagogy (CP) through engaged pedagogy - the use of student experiences, dialogue and interaction from classroom teaching – has been pivotal to my publications.

In the following, I discuss CP as being important in the critique of anti-racism in teaching exchanges, because CP views students as active participants in the educational process; their dialogue and critique in the classroom is important to the process of critical thinking or in Freirean (1970) terms for critical consciousness.

In an educational context, this means that those who have lived racism may bring their experiences into classes, which has the effect of articulating a real understanding of these issues. This issue of subjectivity represents a realisation of the fact that, who we are, and what stories we bring to class have value. Seeing BME experience as ‘knowledge’ is an important epistemological breakthrough to claims of accessing BME voices in the making of anti-racist pedagogy.

Students in the classroom exchange interject with their worldview, they question the dominant and, indeed, mainstream views from class, they are engaging in ‘counter hegemony’ (Gramsci 1971). Critical Pedagogy then, is a way of thinking that can be transformational, open, questioning and critical. As Nieto (1999a:104) says:

> Critical Pedagogy begins where students are at; it is based on using students’ present reality as a foundation for further learning rather than belittling what they know and who they are.

The use of students’ real life stories, Nieto says, can enhance the academic material, as it throws ‘personal light’ on academic learning, making relevant everyday experiences. Critical Race theorists (Dixson and Rousseau, 2005; Ladson Billings, 1995) discussed more fully in section two, have taken the concept of Critical Pedagogy a step further in discussing racism issues and have argued for the importance of counter-narratives from students. Using counter-narratives that draw from concrete experiences is central to this argument, because as Matsuda says, ‘[T]hose that have experienced discrimination, speak with a special voice to which we should listen' (Matsuda et al, 1995 cited in Dixson and Rousseau, 2006:35). Counter-stories, argues Ladson Billings (1995), in classroom debates provide opportunities for the experiences and realities of the marginalised to be expressed. I have found the concept of counter-stories helpful to my analysis of common-sense racism, as it legitimises and gives value to lived experiences of racism as a learning tool for all in class to learn from.

My publications (2006, 2010, 2011) strongly suggest that student views, and counter-narratives from classroom dialogue and debate are important resources in the challenge of racism in class. I try to facilitate students to think critically about all forms of racism. Sometimes this will mean they look ‘inwards’, within their own communities and cultures for bigotry as discussed above. By so engaging with these issues, students can talk about universal rights. An example I raised in my publications was the comparisons of turban head wear with that of the hijaab as universal freedoms of dress.

Teacher-Facilitator – directing classroom dialogue

In the following discussion I draw on three of my publications on pedagogy and show how student experiences, guided by the teacher intervention, are key to anti-racism. In my 2006, 2010 and 2012 publications, I reflected on particular teaching moments in classes on Islamophobia. I noted that student contributions to class discussions raised issues that went beyond the seminar material. That is, students shared lived experiences of being at the receiving end of Islamophobia. These were tense moments, described in one of my publications as a moment for the battle of ideas. In all three publications I utilised student exchanges and interactions to help create a learning experience that critically explored Islamophobic racism. Through students sharing narratives (about their lived experiences of racism), these counter-narratives became a resource for rethinking the relationship between students from different cultural and religious backgrounds.

Several matters are considered in these chapters: the role of the lecturer as facilitator of critical moments; the specific complexities of teaching and learning about racial 'difference' and the classroom as a space for student empowerment. All three publications discussed students' critical (and less than critical) voices against Islamophobia as they were being aired in the seminar discussions. Several confirmations are made here with regard to the role of the lecturer. My work provides a reflexive analysis of my own location as an Asian/Muslim female lecturer from a working class background and how that allowed the students opportunities to say things (on raced, gendered and class issues) in my class that they might not have voiced in other tutors' classes.

Drawing on critical pedagogy methodology all three publications considered how:

- The teacher/facilitator' (Friere1970) can make the classroom reflect the world we live in.

- The classroom can be interactive, where the teaching and learning methods are interchangeable, where we all create knowledge.
- The lecturer /facilitator at times referees between the different experiences in class, enabling the varied voices to be heard.
- The lecturer 'manages' narratives that might run counter to our sociological imaginations; by this I mean that the teaching exchange is a critique between 'common sense' and sociological sense (Bauman 1990).

My 2006, 2010 and 2012 publications are examples of how I use Critical Pedagogy in my classroom. At these moments I navigated between the voices and direct critical thinking in the work of anti-racism. My teaching role, sometimes like the referee in the middle of a battlefield of ideas, carefully liaised between students. Such engaged dialogue can offer powerful tools for critique against racisms that emerge from classroom debates. The teaching moment is an opportunity to simultaneously connect the stories of the participants with those of commentators, academics, communities and social movements.

My work shows that lived experiences shared by minority students in mixed classrooms have often been questioned by white students in the classroom on grounds of both the degree to which these experiences are authentic and whether they offer supposedly legitimate academic value. White students are often found by BME students to be ignorant, if not dismissive, of these racialised experiences and views expressed by BME students. But white students can also feel dismissed, silenced, misunderstood and overwhelmed by these lived experiences. Talk about racism and identity can trigger emotionally driven debates for all students that can lead them all to adopting defensive postures towards themselves, their cultures and religion. For this reason, tutors need to be sensitive to the racialised identity (ies) of the groups they teach.

An example of this tension can be seen in my publication of 2006. A female Muslim student argued that racism against Muslims was on the rise and she shared her own experience of racism:

> I was on a train … a little girl ..began to approach me …Her mother [who was white] pulled her away and said 'You don't sit next to people like that'. 'People like that' simply meant, for me, Muslim people. I choose to wear a hijab [head scarf]. …did she think I was carrying a gun or something? (2006:8-9)

In response to this, an African Caribbean female student in class said 'it was not only Muslims who suffer from racism, other minority communities also did'. This student felt that racism against Africans should be discussed more (although there were many references to African and Caribbean racism in this module). She said:

> Anti-Muslim racism should not to be made a special case. The history of slavery, the suffering met by Africans, is the worst form of racism known in history. I am fed up with people going on and on about Islamophobia (2006:9).

I intervened with a critique of a hierarchy of oppressions when this student placed her experience of racism above another. I argued that all forms of racism(s) should be challenged. The student that made this comment remained silent. Later a Hindu/Asian female student, who agreed that Muslims were being targeted for racist abuse, said (2006:9), *'[B]ut what do you expect, being dressed like that and singling yourself out as being different to other Asians?'* She suggested that such racist abuse could be avoided if Muslim women stopped wearing the hijaab.

This comment resonates with my earlier point on how differences are used to create divisions. To this Hindu student, assimilation, as opposed to accepting differences, is what makes for peaceful existence. The Muslim student told

the class that, *‘Racism was not her problem and that she should have the right to dress as she pleased’*. She said, *'I am not going to hide my identity now.*' Another non-Muslim student of mixed heritage made a similar controversial comment:

> Yeah, but, why? I‘m Catholic and the only time I have worn a scarf is when I visited a Catholic church in Europe out of respect. Anyway, we had to. You’re not in a religious place now, so why do you wear one? (sniggering) (2010:16).

This comment was met with a long drawn out silence. The majority white students looked uncomfortable and remained silent, whilst the minority Muslim students began to appear agitated and looked at each other in disapproval. This was also an uncomfortable moment for me. I stepped in and made the following comment:

> Surely, this is their freedom of choice; why should it matter to others if they wear the hijaab? Freedom of dress, whether of wearing a mini skirt or a hijaab, should be a universal freedom. One should be free to dress as one pleases, so long as we are all free to do so (2010:16-17).

Tutor interjection was needed here to steer the debate, so political connections with regard to universal freedoms were made. Critical Pedagogy would argue that I, as the teacher of the student (Friere, 1970), am also the person with the primary responsibility for the classroom and an intervention is necessary.

These examples suggest anti-racism is a political struggle. Classroom teaching against racism was not only about a sharing moment, but also about exploring and sometimes exposing those negative and uncomfortable experiences and emotions that emerged. It is through such exchanges and discussion that Critical Race Theory and Critical Pedagogic learning was enabled. My interventions sought to connect the student experiences with the

wider social political issues. Reflecting on these critical moments, I claim here that the depth and breadth of the sociological analyses developed from the above critical discussion make ‘anti-racist educational sense’ only when the wider socio-political connections are drawn out.

The battle of ideas against racism can be fraught, but if, as teachers we do not rise to the challenge of undoing racism, we leave such oppressive ideas undisturbed. Counter narratives are necessary, not only as information giving - this student was informed of the relevance of wearing the hijaab - but, most importantly, to question other students' 'everyday' views. The counter narratives of BME/Muslim students, in this case, had dispelled the common sense racism that emerged in class. They did so by sharing experiences that went deeper than book references. My intervention, as the teacher, was to challenge the bigotry and to inform the students of the freedoms to be protected. A further point of my intervention was to re-direct the students' view from personal experience to the broader socio-economic and political issues, in this case, Islamophobia. This facilitation, I argue, is to direct shifts and border crossings across culture and religion, so that classroom exchanges can become learning spaces about minority lives and, in that sense, critical anti-racist learning moments. Such engaged exchanges will/can be, as the above has shown, unsettling. But if we want to shift racist thinking this is a small price to pay in the work of anti-racism. As

Wagner (2005) says:

> anti racist pedagogy represents a shift from traditional university teaching practices and as such involves a changed of thinking that will necessarily be unsettling for some students, as it requires them to move beyond their comfortable, deep rooted views of the world. (263)

To move beyond the deep-rooted views of the world, means that student views are challenged questioned and are encouraged to question these views. This is never an easy task, as teachers in the pedagogical process, we

are in the middle of the traffic of border crossings and sometimes the directions and flows of movement can indeed be challenging. Students will hold on tight to what they know and will present their views as '*just the way it is'*; it is at this juncture that the role of the teacher/or in a Freirean sense, the critical pedagogue steps in and re-directs the *traffic*.

The publications submitted here show the importance of voice and experience in the formulation of knowledge claims. I wanted to provide a picture of how students experienced *their* education from *their* perspective through *their* voice in the education process. To demonstrate this I have made use of CRT/F and Black Feminism with Critical Pedagogy as a way of understanding the lives of BME students who continue to be silenced and othered. And who also speak against this othering in other spaces.

I also claim in this section that a teaching approach that encourages and draws on student experiences has the potential for changed thinking. I argue here that through Critical Pedagogy with CRT/F, and Black Feminism, we as teachers, can use engaged learning methods and counter-voices in order to critique views on racism and open students to developing an anti-racist perspective. Part of this process is to provoke syntheses between students' personal experiences of racism with wider socio-political frameworks. In the concluding section of the critical commentary I explore ways in which classroom exchanges can be a place where the work of anti-racism can be done.

Section Four – A statement of the original contribution to knowledge advanced in the publications comprising my thesis

A PhD in UK universities is awarded to candidates who demonstrate that they have made an original contribution to knowledge. A PhD by publication is no exception. Following the eight factors that Phillips & Pugh (1994: 61-62), suggests, this final section of the commentary puts forward my claims that this portfolio shows that I have (to use Phillips and Pugh's formulation):

- carried out empirical work that has not been done before in HEi classrooms around issues of identity and religiosity, pedagogy and autobiography
- used already known material but with a new interpretation through my reworking of Critical Race Theory and Feminism, Black Feminism, Critical Pedagogy.
- tried out something that has previously only been done in other countries in my application of US and Latin American theory and practice in UK HEI classrooms
- brought new evidence (from the nine publications) to bear on an old issue in terms of breaking through the impasse in anti-racist education theory and practice through a focus on the lived experiences of BME and specifically Asian female students.

These are my original contributions to knowledge and my claims to a PhD by publications.

My portfolio of publications… a labour of *love* and *hate*!

My work outlines the theoretical impasse in anti-racist education theories and policy debates in the UK and suggests that, especially in higher education contexts, they have not advanced much since the 1990s. I show that there is

a need to develop anti-racist theory and praxis in education that considers the complexities of student experiences in the 21st century. In particular, I advance the view that there is a need to theorise the *new racism* - Islamophobia - in this context. My work demonstrates these new conditions can be met with new tools adapted from a synthesis of sociological and pedagogical perspectives developed to date. This commentary also based upon my critical reflections upon personal and politicised experiences of racism and responses to it. It is to these that I now turn to begin this academic commentary that highlights the significance of my work.

First my interest in anti-racism in education comes from deep-rooted personal experience, as outlined in Section one. I can be accused of having a personal crusade, of wanting to (w)'right' the wrongs of racism in education. My scholarly work was a vehicle to develop my views, my experiences and indeed my passion for anti-racism. Writing for a PhD by publication, however, was accidental.

The first published book chapter (2001) *Insiders and /or Outsiders: Black Female Voices from the Academy,* was the beginning of this process of initially unconsciously moving towards obtaining a PhD. The second (2004) *Un-Veiling south Asian Female Identities post September 11th*, engaged directly with students concerning their experiences of racism in a university context at this point in time. The third chapter (2006) *Battlefield of knowing – facilitating controversial classroom debates* was the first to acknowledge the importance of classroom dialogue and interaction in developing a pedagogy of anti-racism. These three book chapters are foundational to my current contribution to knowledge. They were produced to meet particular scholarly and practical needs at particular times. As a consequence of producing these publications, a colleague suggested that I embark on a PhD by publication.

Without really appreciating the level of commitment required, I began the relentless road to both read, research, write and publish. This process was a mixture of love and hate. The love part was the enjoyment of the student and staff discussions and exchanges about theirs and my experiences of their

education. It was important to go beyond my personal reflections and to compare and contrast them with those of others. The hate part was chasing deadlines and having the work approved and accepted by publishers. The hardest part of meeting deadlines was complying with the regulations in which submissions of published work is accepted. At the beginning I thought I needed to publish six or seven pieces, but soon realised that I had to publish nine, to meet the PhD word limit.

A further challenge was to make sure that the publications followed a consistent theme. A third hurdle was the time scale for writing this critical commentary - I was only able to enrol for this PhD when all my published works were in print with ISBN numbers, which then left one year to meet the university deadline for PhD by publication. These experiences indicate that, behind these publications was a long struggle, which made 'this way of *making knowledge'*, both intellectually challenging and tremendously labour intensive.

As I write this concluding section, I do wonder how I managed to write and publish most of my work in six years, whilst also filling a full time teaching post, performing research positions as a C-SAP associate, a member of the C-SAP Race Research Group, the BSA race group and the CRT network Group -and raising two teenage boys. My achievement, I think, should be seen as a testimony to my commitment to the issues raised in my publications. My commitment to my teaching, to my students, however, drove my passion to find new ways to investigate and consider their experiences, and disseminate my findings. These are the personal and political narratives that underline the significance of my work to me. The next section details the academic importance of my research findings adapting Phillips and Pugh's (1994:61-62) headings.

Selected materials from peer reviewed journal articles and book chapters

My first two (2001, 2004) foundational book chapters are outside the six years limit of the regulations for PhD by publication. The remaining published works are within the six years period 2006-2012. These six (2008, 2010, 2010a, 2011, 2011a and 2012) are in peer-reviewed journals. The shift from book chapters to peer-reviewed articles was tactical. By 2006 I realised that, although publishing in peer reviewed journals was more competitive, the turnaround from submission to publication was more rapid. This made the possibility of developing a portfolio of work for my PhD by publication achievable.

Reworking Critical Race Theory and Feminism, Black Feminism, Critical Pedagogy and 'New Ethnicities' theory and applying them to new settings

In this part I show how my writing has revised and adapted known theories to new settings. My work merges theoretical insights of US Critical Race Theory with Black Feminism from US/UK. I chose this merger for two reasons. The first is their analytical positioning and valuing of BME experiences. My work speaks to mainly BME student experiences, although in two publications I speak of BME and white staff experiences and the affinity between staff and students. This insights into anti-racism in education, equipped me to develop an analysis of a newly emergent process of racism, - Islamophobia. This synthesis enabled me to discuss student experiences of anti-Muslim racism as legitimate knowledge that could enlighten us in our understanding of this racism in a university context.

The publications (2001, 2004, 2008, 2011 and 2011a) make original contribution to knowledge by applying theory to the UK higher education context. I combined Hall's (1992) new ethnicities work with Black Feminism and CRT/F to create tools to explore gendered and raced identities and difference in HEIs.

At first glance, these theoretical positioning – new ethnicities and critical race theory - seem contradictory because CRT sees racialised experiences as fixed and centred in its analysis of racism, whilst new ethnicities sees racialised identities as fluid. Non-the-less, I argue that in the current context of our multi-cultural milieu, we need to have an understanding of ‘difference’ that is not 'reduced' to class, or gender or race or, indeed, religion. I argue that current complexities should be analysed through a combination of theoretical explanations. I propose here that the post-modernist discussion of new ethnicities (Hall, 1992, 1993; Sarup 1996; Rattansi & Westwood 1994; Rutherford 1990) - a UK tradition - was important to my understanding of cultural /religious specific identities in the British context. Black Feminism (*Feminist Review* 1984; Garby 1982; Parmar 1990; Brah 1996; Mirza 1992; and Bhavnani 2000) was important to my understanding of gendered/raced identity issues. My analysis of race and gender intersectionality was important to my understanding of the multi-layered dimensions of difference. Finally, while CRT/F is a US innovation that sees race as fixed and cantered, this analysis helped me appreciate the importance of raced experiences of minoritised students in a UK university context. CRT/F with Black Feminism brought back to life the importance of black experience in the making of knowledge.

Whilst I struggled with the theoretical tension between the fluidity of post-modernist analyses of new ethnicities and the raced experience of CRT/F, together these theoretical perspectives helped me to advance my analysis of the varied student experiences of racism. They made sense of students' lived experiences of anti-Muslim racism vis-à-vis other racisms.

The first publication, *Insiders and/or Outsiders: Black Female Voices from the Academy* (2001) is the only one written before 9/11. It refers to the students classed and raced identities with little reference to ‘religiosity’. Student positionalities were articulated through notions of commonality *and* differences. My contribution to original knowledge in this chapter and a theme throughout my work is the importance of identity and differences in a

university context. I claim that the personal is pedagogical. By this I mean that students bring into the classroom a wealth of experiences that can speak to the sociological issues under discussion. This is developed through Housee (2008), *Does Ethnicity matter when we teach about race*, in Housee (2011) *What difference does difference makes?* and in Housee and Richards (2011a) *"And still we rise" A story of resilience and transformation*. The themes developed to include questions about lecturer identity and how this has impacted on teaching on racism was raised.

These publications demonstrate an original claim to knowledge by subjecting existing theories – namely new ethnicities, Black Feminism and merging these with CRT/F to make sense of the multi-layered racial identities of students in the university context. This eclectic synthesis has been my contribution *to knowledge in a way it has not previously been done.*

Theoretical reflections on identity construction are explored in these articles through discussions of the following themes:

- Racialised identities are central to building trust and confidence in HEi and specifically in classrooms.
- Sharing and exchanging racialised experiences within the academy is seen as pivotal to critical pedagogy and can deepen the understanding of racism.
- White lecturers teaching race issues are important to the anti-racist struggles in HEi institutions.
- BME lecturers presence in HEi's are important for the challenge of whiteness and can help dispel the idea that U.K HEi's are singularly white spaces.
- Affinity between students and lecturer can be empowering and lead to support networks in the academy.

These publications (2004, 2011, 2011a) claim that a deeper understanding of educational issues for BME students requires a student-centred learning

approach. An approach that invites student experience draws on differences as resources in the learning context and welcomes staff and student interaction, through biography and autobiography. Although some of this has been discussed in British feminist educational theory (See for example, Stanley, 1993, on auto/biography in Sociology), I rework, revise and reinvigorate the debates from black perspectives. This is another key knowledge claim. My practice demonstrates in a UK HEI context what hooks claimed in 1994. It is through shared stories of resilience that teaching can lead to *transgression* against racial, sexual, and class boundaries (hooks, 1994). This becomes the gift of education from BME students and staff to HEIs and social science.

Another contribution to original knowledge is the discussion of Islamamophobia and Muslim students' experiences within the new ethnicities debate. My publications (2004, 2006, 2010, 2010a, and 2012) detail how post 9/11 impacted on student identities. The theme of Islamophobia were not identified or selected, they emerged organically from students. Students were keener to express their cultural and religious differences in a post 9/11 moments. These chapters contextualised BME experiences culturally and religiously and discussed how these experiences are intersectionally linked (Brah and Phoenix (2009) and Yuval-Davis (2006). For example, debates around intersectionality were particularly important to my understanding of power debates within and across differences. My original contribution to knowledge is in how I problematised the new ethnicities debate to allow for a grounded sociological analysis of religiosity, especially in HEIs.

Classroom participant observations in an HEI around issues of identity and religiosity, pedagogy and autobiography and the application of existing methodologies to new conditions

My classroom observations demonstrate that HEIs are not benign spaces. They are, instead, spaces where identities are negotiated and re-negotiated in the teaching and learning moments. This leads to a deeper understanding of students' subjectivity, which is central to an appreciation of the multiple and

contradictory forms of racisms within these spaces. This appreciation of subjectivity and the anti-racism grounded in it allows for an exploration of whiteness as an identity position rather than a fixed identity (Leonardo 2002) (discussed fully in Section two). It affirms the principle that teaching on racism issues should not be the sole/ soul privilege of BME staff (2001, 2008). It also affirms the particular and peculiar 'outsiders-within' relationship between lecturer and student that can develop as a result of the combination of reflective autobiography work with BME students' experiences.

My observations encouraged my borrowing and extension of critical pedagogical practices from mainly a US context for use in my classrooms. These practices were grounded in CRT/F, Black Feminism and Critical Pedagogy and allowed me to question the dominant discourses in anti-racism education in UK HEIs based on what the students said. Without these methods, it would have been difficult to capture and appreciate changes in the students' talking and being.

As noted above, the literature on racism in education tends to focus on recruitment, attainment, widening participation and curriculum development (Jacobs 2006). Little is said on student perspectives, voice and views in the work of anti-racism. One of my contribution to knowledge has been to fill this gap, to present teaching and learning practices that consider student experience, that draw on student voice and dialogue in the making of anti-racism in university classroom contexts.

These observations allowed me to develop novel pedagogical practices – and to share in publications these practices in teaching sessions that draw on student experience and dialogue. My publications are examples of classroom dialogue that welcome student voice and experience of racism. They offer counter narratives to dominant racist discourses, as well as demonstrate the power of those discourses. Freirean practice combined with anti-racist practice offers a student-centred methodology for teaching students about and against racism. I worked not to present BME/Muslim students as objects of study, or victims of anti-Muslim racism, but as people and students, as

subjects, with a voice and experience and critique of racism that could be helpful to the learning against racism.

By using CRT/F, Feminism and Critical Pedagogy, I provide a synthesised position that considers class analysis with racialised experiences and endorses an emancipatory approach. I see this fusion as progressive. It presents education and educational institutions as not only concerned with social and political control, but with hope of and possibilities for social transformation and transgression.

Another original contribution to knowledge advanced in my publications is through my *revision and adaptation of existing methodologies to a different context to those in which they were first developed*. As noted above, there was a gap in this literature around classroom interaction, dialogue and student voice and anti-racism in education, especially in HEIs. In four publications (2006, 2010, 2010a, 2012) I begin to fill this gap by exploring the pedagogical processes of doing anti-racism in a university classroom setting.

These publications demonstrate an original contribution to knowledge by providing insights on teaching practice. These publications are innovative, at least in the British HEI'S context; they demonstrate how making use of student centered learning methods that draw on student experiences and perspectives can do anti-racism in the classroom contexts. My contribution to knowledge is that student voice and counter voice, with the teacher as facilitator, directing and re-directing, can form the material for anti-racist discussions in classrooms.

Anti-racist thinking, as suggested by Moya (2006), is about opening our classrooms to educational experiences that challenge discrimination and injustices. For me, part of this endeavour involves drawing on student thinking and experiences and connecting them to the wider socio-political world of racism, including Islamophobia. This original method combines key elements of Freire's (1970) 'dialogic education' method, with its focus on student engagement in dialogue with lecturers, with CRT's engaged learning

method to enable discussions that encourage counter-voices to the dominant racist discourses and practices.

This is an original extension of the concept of 'voice'. Developing this, I argue that BME students too have a voice; the point is to listen to them. Sometimes this means encouraging students to speak in class; sometimes it means opening out non-conventional spaces that can break the silences. My article *When 'Silences are broken: an out of class discussion with Asian Female Students'* (2010 a) captures this movement by suggesting that we welcome the student voice from the spaces in HEi's that are the 'safe zones' the non classroom/teaching spaces.

My publications identify silences as a form of oppression and the voice as a means of empowerment. However, if the formal spaces of classrooms are too public for some students who wish to speak of sensitive race (ist) issues, we have to welcome their voices in other spaces. My publication (2010a) argues that teachers and lecturers should 'listen' in the moments and spaces where students willingly voice their views. I have worked with *different voices* to make sense of the pedagogical point of '*doing*' anti-racism through lived experience. These are explored in my publications: (2006)*,' Battlefields of knowing. Facilitating controversial classroom debates'* (2010a); *'To veil or not to veil' students speak out on Islam(ophobia) from class* and (2012); and *'What's the point? Anti-racist counter narratives against Islamophobia.*

The application of US and Latin American theory and practice in UK HEi classrooms to create new evidence to bear on an old issue based on the lived experiences of BME and specifically Asian female students

The publications above synthesised UK anti-racism for HEIs from Freirean educational practices and CRT/F theories and concepts. The principles of this original synthesis are that it:

- Develops students' critical inquiry skills to encourage multiple viewpoints and perspectives to be presented in or outside class that can lead to student critical engagement.
- Utilises real-life experiences and commentary drawn from student exchanges and interactions in order to package a learning experience that critically explores racism.
- Sees the role of the lecturer as facilitator, sometimes the 'referee', in the battlefield of anti-racist discussions.
- Makes connections between student experiences and the wider social political issues and ideologies that create and re-enforce racism.
- Examines the ways in which classroom interaction, dialogue and exchanges can help undo racist thinking and can inform anti-racist critiques.

Although, these ideas themselves have been around for a while, my use and synthesis of them is unique in the UK literature. Thus I adapt methods through practice from one context (USA) to another (UK). I claim that teaching methods that engage students can lead to critical reflection on the socio-economic and political/religions issues and can be key to promoting anti-racist discussions in class. Through counter- narratives, teachers and students can engage in reflexive dialogues that can make sense of common sense in ways that transform it into good sense (Bauman 1990). It is not, therefore, just a matter of exchanging discourse and experiences between students, but about listening to what minority students have to say about their experiences that can result in critical awareness of anti-racist education. This is not to suggest those students' views should be adopted uncritically, but to suggest that if students' views are sought through critical and problem–posing approaches (Friere 1970) as shown with Figueroa's matrix (Figueroa, 1999 in Housee, 2011), their insights can be crucial for developing meaningful, and engaging, educational experiences for everyone. Part of this process is to provoke syntheses between students' personal experiences of racism with wider socio-political frameworks (Figueroa 1999).

I note that the first step to changed thinking is in this process of de-construction. That is, the class needs to break down the/their old ideas into their basic parts that can then become building blocks for alternative ideas and possibilities. As Moya says, this is now the time for growth:

> As educators, we want to attend to the various perspectives our students bring into the classroom…. we give them an opportunity to change and grow. After all, if we wanted our students, upon leaving the classrooms, to be the same people as they were when they entered it, we would not have accomplished much (2006:108).

The battle of ideas against racism can be fraught, but if as teachers we do not rise to the challenge of undoing racism – as Moya says above -we leave oppressive ideas and practices undisturbed. My work illustrates and demonstrates this critical approach.

Where do we go from here... some concluding thoughts.

The first step to create a learning environment that is conducive to anti-racism is to welcome student dialogue/voice. My publications have shown that I do this by encouraging student centred teaching methodologies. I argue that teaching methods that welcome active engagement in the classroom allows for critical thinking. It is by engaging in this dual process of 'engage and learn' Dhanda (2008), of 'shared lived racism', that students are able to raise the critique of anti-racism. Through small group workshops and discussion groups students begin to feel more comfortable when discussing sensitive race issues. With particular reference to my (2011) article, for example, I show how Asian women generally and Muslim women (in particular) in the current climate of Islamaphobic racism, have been theorised as oppressed and victimised. It was, therefore, important that such female Muslim voices were heard and empowered to speak for and of themselves (Zine, 2006; Haw, 2009). A good illustration of this is my publication (2011), which shows how teachers can provoke syntheses between students' personal experiences of racism with wider socio-political frameworks (following Figueroa, 1999).

In this concluding section I develop a method that draws on and adapts Figueroa's (1999) concepts of 'situational' and 'educational' tasks as tools for creating anti-racist pedagogy in the classroom. For Figueroa, a situational task is when teachers respond to the free flow of comments and discussions in class. A situational task requires the teacher to sensitively negotiate and redirect the discussion to produce an educational task. The role of the teacher/facilitator is to connect the classroom discussions with the wider socio-political issues relevant to academic debates.

Below I have adapted Figueroa's ideas in the matrix below to make pedagogical sense of the students' narratives discussed in the above example:

Re-constructive - synthesis corrective/positive	**Situational - student/staff voice**	**Educational/sociological/ political connections**
Resource: using a Newspaper cutting on the right to wear the Hijaab	Dealing with misconception as they arise in class. Students debating the right to wear the hijaab and the racist backlash.	Connections between student comments with wider socio-cultural issues, policies, and the politics of freedom of expression and dress wear.
Student comment Negative (thesis)	*Yeah, why? You're not in a religious place now, so why do you wear one (hijaab)?*	Discussion of human rights cases, Race Relations Acts, equal opportunity policies.
Student response: Corrective (antithesis) Counter-hegemonic narrative	*I choose to wear a hijaab. When I first started covering. I was scared to go out... I am not going to hide my identity now*.	Dismantling ethnocentrism, ethnicist/racist thinking and stereotypes, in this case with particular attention to Islamophobia.
Teacher comment: Positive/corrective **Re-constructive** (synthesis*)*	*Surely, this is their freedom of choice; why should it matter to others. Freedom of dress, whether of*	Using educational sources from feminist, anti-racist and critical pedagogy literature to form alternative

	*wearing a mini skirt or a hijaab, should be a universal freedom. One should be free to dress as one pleases, so long as we are all free t*o do so.	arguments/views on Hijaab wearing (e.g. article by J Zine) and so students can 'engage and learn' Dhanda (2008).

The teaching aim as elaborated in the matrix is to elevate the understanding of raced experiences, so they are more than *simply* a sharing of students' experiences, but are about an understanding of '*others'* experiences, in order to make the wider socio-political connections with the 'situational' contributions that emerge from class. It is through this synthesis that anti-racism from classroom dialogue is made possible.

This adaptation of Figueroa's matrix offers a clarification of how oppressive ideas can be challenged and positive growth can be promoted in classroom teaching. Making use of 'situational'/educational and corrective/positive dimensions as shown above has provided a model that has helped me to turn the situational dialogue moment into an anti-racist educational critique. Such teaching strategy, which is inclusive of the student voice, in critical exchanges, can be the vehicle that promotes anti-racist teaching and learning.

Conclusion

I conclude by asserting that the work of anti-racism requires that we as teachers and lecturers must attend to the student voice and experiences that emerge from classroom teaching. We begin where students are. My work illustrates and demonstrates this critical approach. It assumes that students do come to class armed with their own experiences, which critical teaching acknowledges through a dialogue with students. In our classroom teaching we make use of this personal experience/sense and direct and re-direct it to make anti-racist educational sense. This is my model.

I thus conclude reflecting on where I began. Unlike my own harrowing experiences of racism shared in section one; I want my classroom teaching to welcome students' varied lived experiences. I want my classes to be open to these differing experiences. Fundamentally, I want my classes to be a ‘space’ where oppressive views and ideas are challenged and questioned. My interest is to find ways in which educators can work with students to undo the damage of racism, to work against racism, and to value ethnic minority student s’ experiences and voice in this anti-racist critique. My publications have sought to deepen our knowledge of the way BME students' experiences can be utilised in the work of anti racism in higher education teaching and learning environments.

Footnote 1.

The Race Relations Amendment Act 2000.

The RRA 1976 was amended by the RRA Amendment ACT 2000. The RRAA represents a milestone for race equality in the UK – it requires all public institutions to take action to promote equality of opportunity and good relations between people of different racial groups. The changes of the law developed in response to the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry Report (the Macpherson Report), an inquiry into events surrounding the murder of a black London teenager. The Act came into force on 2nd April 2001. It requires public authorities to make the promotion of racial equality central to all activities., all employment matters, such as recruitment , training, promotion and dismissal.

The Equality Act 2010

The primary purpose of the Act is to consolidate the complicated and numerous array of Acts and Regulations, which formed the basis of anti-discrimination in Great Britain. This was, primarily, the Equal Pay Act 1970, the Sex Discrimination Act 1975, the Race Relations Act 1976, the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and three major statutory instruments protecting discrimination in employment on grounds of religion or belief , sexual orientation and age. This legislation has the same goals as the four major EU Equal Treatment Directives, whose provisions it mirrors and implements. It requires equal treatment in access to employment as well as private and public services, regardless of the protected characteristics of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation.

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