



PALGRAVE STUDIES IN RACE, INEQUALITY AND  
SOCIAL JUSTICE IN EDUCATION

# Doing Equity and Diversity for Success in Higher Education

Redressing Structural Inequalities  
in the Academy

*Edited by* Dave S. P. Thomas · Jason Arday

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# Palgrave Studies in Race, Inequality and Social Justice in Education

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Dave S. P. Thomas • Jason Arday  
Editors

# Doing Equity and Diversity for Success in Higher Education

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ISSN 2524-633X

ISSN 2524-6348 (electronic)

Palgrave Studies in Race, Inequality and Social Justice in Education

ISBN 978-3-030-65667-6

ISBN 978-3-030-65668-3 (eBook)

<https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-65668-3>

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## DJB Dedication

Professor Chris Mullard, CBE

It would not be an exaggeration to suggest that Dame Jocelyn Barrow (affectionately known as DJB) contributed significantly to Britain's eventual realisation that its inequalities in general and its race and community relations in particular were an insidious societal problem that needed to be tackled and resolved. The title of this book could not be more befitting to commemorate the work of one of the most significant Black women of our time. If this were not recognition enough of a life which has inspired so many, then to dedicate to her *Doing Equity and Diversity for Success in Higher Education* reaches beyond commemoration, for it confirms and seals the acknowledgement of her career as a teacher, lecturer and public figure as that of a 'doer'. For DJB was above all else a firm believer in 'doing'; in Chap. 2, her conversation with the editor is a testament to that. But describing her simply as a 'doer' would be to neglect her understanding that her practice of 'doing' was founded upon three pillars.

The first pillar was her keen observation—through experience—of what constituted the problem that needed to be addressed. To a great extent, this came about as a result of her early years in colonial Trinidad, where, as a member of Eric Williams' People's National Movement, she supported the fight for independence. On arriving in Britain in 1959, the year after the Notting Hill Riots, she observed and later experienced first-hand the scale and depth of racial discrimination in the UK.

For DJB, this was both traumatic and revelatory. For like so many of the Windrush Generation, she considered imperial Britain in the late 1950s/early 1960s to be the 'mother country', where social equality and democracy reigned supreme, alongside equal opportunities for all; where the streets were paved with gold and there would be a welcoming acceptance for the thousands of West Indians invited to migrate and work here. Her response to the reality of the Britain she found on arrival culminated in a series of 'doings', from helping to found and becoming the National Secretary of CARD (the Campaign Against Racial Discrimination) to undertaking research and chairing inquiries into racial discrimination and inequality in schools, colleges and universities, as discussed in conversation in the pages that follow.

Traumatic though they were, however, her own observations and experiences were not in themselves sufficient to galvanise DJB into 'doing'. For the second pillar on which her 'doing' was founded was the conscious emergence of a changed orientation to the world, the development of a profound comprehension of the problems she observed and experienced.

For DJB, a proper grasp of what was commonly called 'colour prejudice' in the 1960s required a realisation that the problem of discrimination was inherent not only at the level of the individual, but rather, it was systemic and institutional throughout society, if not, as some of us argued, institutionalised. Thus, it was not just about prejudice or even discrimination but, instead, it was about racial and social inequality. Even more sociologically persuasive, it was about power: who holds it, who does not, how it is constructed and distributed; and for DJB particularly, how the views of those in power permeated the curricula and modes of operation of secondary and higher education.

Although she never formalised this thinking into a coherent philosophy, she nevertheless understood it in an intuitive and creative way. This led her to reject, for instance, the assimilationist notion of what in the 1960s and 1970s was known as 'immigrant education' in favour of 'multicultural education'. Not only did this shift in orientation display an understanding of the importance of culture and diversity, it also acknowledged the claims of the powerless and discriminated against, the socially and educationally deprived groups in society. It was an orientation which

supported a vision of not only a multicultural, democratic and egalitarian education system but also of society at large.

This is easily detectable in all DJB's research and writings, particularly after the 1970s when she openly began to identify the problem as one of racism, and thus saw racial discrimination as a consequence and manifestation of that. It was particularly evident in the report of the investigation she chaired into secondary schools in the Borough of Brent, between 1980 and 1984, where she concluded:

Brent is almost two kingdoms – a prosperous middle-class North which is more White than Black ... a South which is more Black than White.

For our purposes here, the third pillar on which 'doing' is founded necessitates a practice: a going beyond observations, experiences and the formation of a critical orientation, to the carrying out of actions. And as if waltzing into the steps of a graceful foxtrot, almost imperceptibly DJB did just this. The actions she took were oppositional; that is to say, they were deliberately structured towards combating racism, institutional or otherwise. Yet at the same time, they were fully supportive of the aspirations of the BAME communities and the criticisms they levelled at the educational, policing, political and corporate establishments in particular.

Working within a strategic framework of a 'bottom-up/top-down' approach, DJB practised—and bequeathed to those who follow in her steps—the notion of what she termed 'pincher politics': a set of practices aimed at 'pinching' individuals and institutions in order to change their values, beliefs and behaviours.

Perhaps more than anything else, this approach and set of oppositional actions—forms of 'doing'—characterised her work as recorded in this book. Often quietly, but always purposefully, Dame Jocelyn Barrow ever abided by the maxim that it is not enough to understand society—what is necessary is to change it.

So, as I stated earlier, it is more than befitting that this book should be dedicated to her memory. For what arose out of her observations and experiences, out of her unique perspective on racism and equality, was an impulse which continued throughout her life towards 'doing equity and diversity – for success'.

# Acknowledgements

This book would not have been possible without the support of my dear friend and mentor, the exceptional Dr Jason Arday, who entertained what seemed to be an aspiration and a far-fetched idea at the time.

Dave would like to express his sincere gratitude to Professor Robbie Shilliam and Professor Robert Beckford for their guidance and support that enabled him to extend his thoughts beyond his immediate capabilities. He would also like to thank the following friends and colleagues who have supported and inspired him throughout this process: the late great Dame Jocelyn Barrow, Professor Sir Geoffery Palmer, Professor Sir Hillary Beckles, Dr Miranda Brawn, Professor Toni Williams, Dr Carlton Brown, Marika Sherwood, Professor Lez Henry, Professor Heidi Safia Mirza, Professor Kevin Hylton, Professor Marcia Wilson, Professor Olivette Otele, Nathan Ghann and Professor Paul Phillips. Most importantly, Dave would like to thank his amazing family: Shauna, Malik, Deja, Mum (Merle), Brian, Craig and Andrea for their patience, inspiration, understanding and unconditional support.

Jason would like to express his sincere gratitude to Dr Zainab Khan, Michael Cobden, Stephanie DeMacro Berman, Dr Muna Abdi, Micheal Roy Hobson, Izram Chaudry, Beth Thomas-Hancock, Professor Vikki Boliver, Dr Anthony Maher, Dr Dina Zoe Belluigi, Delayna Spencer, Ammara Khan. Jason would like to extend a huge thanks to his

exceptional family: Debbie-Ann, Taylah, Noah, Mum, Dad, Simon, Joseph and Sandro. Finally, a special thanks must go to the brilliant Dave Thomas, a truly wonderful human being and one of the very best people I have had the privilege of meeting in my life.

We also wish to thank the Palgrave Macmillan Editorial Team, particularly former Chief Editor Eleanor Christie and Rebecca Wyde, for providing this opportunity and for believing in us and in our ability to realise this important project.

We acknowledge the contributors to this publication for their generous intellectual capital that is contained within these pages. We have been honoured to build relationships with you throughout the course of compiling this book. And to all those who have negotiated the spaces of the academy in search of academic sustenance and intellectual liberation; be the change you want to see, so that these spaces can become welcoming spaces for all people to do, be and become in striving to achieve their dreams.

## Praise for *Doing Equity and Diversity for Success in Higher Education*

“In this meticulously curated and wide-ranging volume, Thomas and Arday perform the crucial task of setting today’s movements for racial justice in their historical context, as well as offering examples of concrete and practical strategies that contemporary activists and scholars are adopting. Bringing together veterans of the struggle from around the world with younger thinkers and practitioners, the volume examines questions of equity and justice in their many interconnected dimensions.”

—Dr Meera Sabaratnam, *SOAS University of London, UK*

“There has never been a more critical time for this collection of incredible academics and thought leaders to come together to voice their experiences and ideas on equity and diversity. The range and variety of perspectives expressed are refreshing and insightful and reflect the complexities of race and racism in the higher education sector. This book should not just be read, it should be used as a tool for action. If it is utilised in this way, it could have a huge impact on the sector and change the way that we work within institutions.”

—Paulette Williams, *University College London, UK*

“For this wide-ranging and inter-disciplinary book, Thomas and Arday have curated a stunning group of international scholars to critically address the equity and diversity agenda in higher education. With recent developments decisively puncturing myths of meritocracy and equality of opportunity, this collection is more timely than ever.”

—Professor Robbie Shilliam, *Johns Hopkins University, USA*

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**Dame Jocelyn Anita Barrow** DBE (15 April 1929–9 April 2020) was a British educator, community activist. Born in Trinidad, Barrow pioneered multicultural education in England and was a founding member and General Secretary of the Campaign Against Racial Discrimination (CARD), the organisation responsible for the Race Relations Act of 1968. She was the first Black woman to be a governor of the BBC and was also Deputy Chair of the Broadcasting Standards Council, Trustee of the National Museums and Galleries on Merseyside and a Governor of

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**Sir Hilary Beckles** is the eighth Vice-Chancellor of The University of the West Indies (The UWI) is a distinguished academic, international thought leader, United Nations committee official and global public activist in the field of social justice and minority empowerment. He is the President, Universities Caribbean and Chairman, Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Reparations Commission. He has lectured extensively in Europe, the Americas, Africa and Asia, and has authored over 100 peer-reviewed essays in scholarly journals, and over 13 books on subjects ranging from Atlantic and Caribbean history, gender relations in the Caribbean, sport development and popular culture. For his outstanding academic leadership and public advocacy around these themes, in 2015 Sir Hilary was invited by the President of the UN General Assembly to deliver the feature address during the sitting in which the period 2015–2024 was declared the UN Decade for People of African Descent.

**Dina Zoe Belluigi** work relates to the agency and ethico-historical responsibility of artists and academics in contexts undergoing transitions in authority and in the shadow of oppression. Shaped in part by her experiences as a practitioner in creative arts education and later in academic development in her country of South Africa, she is concerned with the complexity of the conditions which may enable the development of artists and academics as critical consciousness. She is committed to the growth of pan-African and international networks for advancing Critical University Studies, where committed scholars, practitioners and policy makers across the globe actively pursue an emancipatory imagination for the future university.

**Michael Cole** is a Senior Lecturer, a Principle Teaching Fellow, an allied healthcare professional and a part-time PhD student. Cole's special interests are in anti-racist pedagogies, and in the theory and practice of exercise rehabilitation in treating injuries, pain and lifestyle-related conditions of ill-health. Cole has previously worked in the industry, in Further Education, and as a Programme Leader in Higher Education. Cole continues as an education consultant (External Examiner and Quality Assurance), a staff training facilitator (Anti-Racist Pedagogies) and a

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**Nathan Ghann** is the founding director of The Educate Group, an organisation which partners with Higher Education providers to ensure students from under-represented backgrounds achieve their full potential. Previously he undertook the role of Student Success Lead at the University of Hertfordshire and worked on the Office for Students funded project *'Addressing Barriers to Student Success: using a value-added metric and inclusive curriculum approach'*. Alongside this, he was the founding Chair of the UH BAME Staff Network and contributed to the Race Equality Chartermark self-assessment team. He consults on the areas of diversity and inclusion within the Higher education sector.

**Michelle Grue** interdisciplinary research in Education and Writing draws on Black feminism to investigate diversity issues in academia and in digital writing. Her current project focuses on the official structures that do or do not exist in Writing and Rhetoric doctoral programmes to teach graduate students how to research race and gender in Writing Studies. Grue earned her Bachelor of Arts in Creative Writing at Pepperdine University and her MA at the Gevirtz Graduate School of Education at the University of California, Santa Barbara. She gained her PhD at this university. She is joining the faculty in the Fall of 2020 as an Assistant Teaching Professor, also at UCSB.

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**Michael Roy Hobson** is a Senior Lecturer in Physical Education, Sport and Youth Development at St Mary's University, Twickenham. He is completing his doctoral studies supervised by Rachel Sandford and

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**Maryam Jameela** is an honorary research fellow at the University of Sheffield and her research focuses on revisioning trauma theory for Islamophobic contexts. Her work contributes to discourses on necropolitical examinations of power, intersecting oppressions in anti-racist scholarship, and anti-Blackness in South Asian communities. She tweets @yammatron.

**Harshad Keval** is a writer, educator and Senior Lecturer in Sociology, with specialisation in Race, Postcolonial and Decolonial Theory at Canterbury Christ Church University, UK. His interests are in anti-racist and anti-colonial social justice in all sections and levels of society. He specialises in exploring racisms, race-thinking and the role that certain types of knowledge and social theory play in perpetuating racism, especially within educational and knowledge systems. He has a particular interest in cross-over creative spaces in intellectual, spiritual and academic arenas, and aims at troubling and disrupting conventional demarcations. He writes firstly from himself as a centre and site of outward-bound connections and hopes to connect with constellations of other hopeful people, ideas and movements.

**Amina Mama** is a Nigerian/British Professor, feminist, academic and consultant whose professional career spans a variety of European, African and U.S. tertiary institutions. Founding Editor of *Feminist Africa*, she is an accomplished educator, researcher and writer, with a doctorate in psy-

chology from the University of London's Birkbeck College. Her best-known works include *Beyond the Masks: Race, Gender and Subjectivity* (1995), *Engendering African Social Sciences* (co-edited, CODESRIA 1997) and two documentary film collaborations, *The Witches of Gambaga* (Fadoa Films 2010), and *The Art of Ama Ata Aidoo* (Fadoa films 2014). In 2009, she was recruited to chair the revitalization and departmentalization of the Women's Studies programme at the University of California, Davis, and was the founding director of the Feminist Research Institute (2016).

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including, *Black British Feminism, Race Gender and Educational Desire* and *Young Female and Black*, which was voted in the BERA top 40 most influential educational studies in Britain. She is a leading voice in the global debate on decolonisation and, with Jason Arday, recently co-edited the flagship book, *Dismantling Race in Higher Education: Racism, whiteness and decolonising the academy* (Palgrave Macmillan).

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**Sir Geoffery Palmer** was the first Black university professor in Scotland. He is a Professor Emeritus at Heriot-Watt University in Edinburgh. He received the Distinguished American Award (regarded in the industry as its ‘Noble Prize’) for his research on cereals and invented a technique that accelerated the production of malt from grain, which became an industry standard. He is the author of a book on race relations: *Mr White and the Ravens* and a book on Caribbean (Jamaican/Scottish) history: *The Enlightenment Abolished: Citizens of Britishness*. He is the Honorary President of Edinburgh and Lothians Regional Equality Council (ELREC) and was awarded a Knighthood in the New Year’s Honours list of the United Kingdom in 2014 for his work in science, human rights and charity.

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## Dead Is the Empire: Buried, Its Pedagogy Should Be!

Had I known, I might have stayed. But how could I have known. Stayed where? Here or there? These were the questions that followed the invitation to prepare this foreword to a book that threatens to bury much of what is known. The practicing of equity in pursuit of diversity in the higher education system of Britain matters enormously to Black lives. Redressing inequality of a structural kind matters most. But, where do I begin to tell the story of what a Black life could be? I wish to speak about the university as I experienced it. I begin with an immigrant's invitation before this academic expectation.

I was placed on a plane and sent from Barbados to Birmingham. Just a teen, I was rushed with the wind from a colonial village to an industrial city where work was promised to parents at rates above those left behind. Back across the middle passage, I thought, from Little England to Great Britain, an internal journey. I was coming home; home sweet home, the motherland, God saved the Queen!

The names were the same. The plantations back there and the buildings over here had owners who were the same. The Blacks branded on their back, back there and the streets over here carried the same names. Everything was familiar. We were, after all, one big extended family—until the school bell rang.

The themes that hold together this collection of courageous essays have a great deal to do with what happened next. That was 1969 when Enoch Powell welcomed me to the Midlands of England. He was virulent knocking the stuffing out of the chickens he said were coming home to roost. Barbados was Britain's first Black slave society. It was invented in the imagination of these Isles and implemented as a crime against humanity in the West Indies, a long way away from home.

Two generations it took my kind to knock on the doors of colleges and universities and then to be told to hold. A Black graduate was not a gift—not required; so, why enquire about matriculation rules and pose a predicament for keepers of the enrolment keys.

Doing diversity in the university and redressing the indignity of inequality in ethnicity took its cool time in becoming an academic discourse. Today, they are at the core of the cursing about Black lives mattering. Institutions are insisting upon harnessing a new era in which cultural knowledge, historical awareness and moral reflection should have traction as content for the curriculum.

I was assigned to a school, a building, and told by a City Councillor that there I would find many of my kind. There was no test or assessment for the assignment. It was a long way from the grammar school back there. Here, no Latin nor literature, nor scripture; just endless hours of woodwork and metal work and pottery. The artisan was intended to snuff out and replace the academic. This was the expectation.

The factories in the vicinity were filled with men and women who came before, and most had passed through my gate. Two decades and no one noticed that the City Council had committed the sin of racial profiling. Children from the cane field were de-educated and doomed—from plantation to school prisons, and inexorably for many, to jail.

This research collection tells the academic allegory of where we have reached today. West Indians and East Indians pushing their professors and on graduation finding themselves rejected by private sectors. Racism isn't random. It is intuitive and institutionalised. It is popular culture and defines the national interest. Race ideology is embedded because the nation was built upon it. Empire gave it energy and profits provided the fuel. Universities and churches were nurtured by it and professors made

a science of it. It is everywhere. In the air we made. There is no escaping it. But now as then, here and back there, humanity finds its heroes.

From the history curriculum career education officers carved out the imperial content. This was necessary so as not to terrorise the White child raised to think in terms, every term, of its racial triumphalism. It grew to maturity believing that not knowing is not to feel accountable. No shame and no guilt. Just silence. But elites knew and continued to drink the devil's wine. The masses got cheaper sugar and finer cotton from the plantations. All was well within the realm.

There is no finer volume of scholarship that delves to the centre of these discourses. The cobwebbed culture of racism holds together the legacies of imperialism in which Great Britain did best in the business of selling Black souls and enchained bodies. With faster ships and better rates from the City of London, its merchants managed colonies in the East and West, North and South. They brought home the toxin, the racism that poisons the academic culture, leaving the future to figure out where exits exist. These academic discourses and the researches that give them legs are bound together here as testimony of the imposing truth, that racism is about the extraction of value and its transference to benefactors who believe in the notion that those with more are better than those with less. Whiteness was invented in this language and is spoken loudest in the laboratories of universities where history became heresy.

I wish I knew the content of this collection back then, before setting out from the Caribbean on a domestic journey against the winds that blew my ancestors to the bosoms of bondage. From the slum of my school with no suburb, I escaped by grace to a university, via a college for adult learning. There, I found no pedagogical peace. The curriculum in philosophy deemed every writer from Africa, Asia and their diasporas to be protest writers unfit to carry the title *Philosopher!* From there I fled once again to a Faculty that taught the things which mattered most to a Black life. It was the 1970s and none of my kind could be found conducting a class. With no further to run I fled—a one-way flight to freedom from Britain. But I did ask myself, who will clean up the imperial mess I left behind?

**xxx      Dead Is the Empire: Buried, Its Pedagogy Should Be!**

Thomas and Arday are calling for an end to the flying. They are empowering Faculty fighters, urging them to rise and take a stand! Universities must undo and sweep away the debris of the crumbling colonialism. They were critical to the creation of the racism that still suffocates the classrooms. But the truth is that the Empire is dead and its pedagogy should now be buried.

Kingston, Jamaica

Professor Sir Hilary Beckles

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