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Andrea Murray-Lichtman and Siham Elkassem

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Article abstract

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ACADEMIC VOYEURISM: THE WHITE GAZE IN SOCIAL WORK

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Abstract: This article explores the insidiousness of racism and White supremacy embedded within the social work academy. We conceptualize the social work academy as the institutionalized practices within social work education, research, policy, and practice. As such, the social work academy is the bedrock that continues to perpetuate racism and colonialism within the profession. Anchored by an integrative analysis of social work that draws on both postcolonial and critical race theory, we theorize that, rooted in this foundation of oppression, White supremacy in social work often manifests as academic voyeurism—the non-performative White gaze. We suggest that academic voyeurism within the social work academy renders Black people, Indigenous people, and People of Colour (BIPOC) as bodies to be studied, exoticized, and theorized about, without any substantive anti-racist change or action required. Academic voyeurism sustains social work's dissonant position—its endorsement of social justice alongside its simultaneous ambivalence towards racism and White supremacy. The discussion draws on historical underpinnings, research, and experiential data to turn the gaze onto the academy, illuminating the implications of academic voyeurism on racialized bodies and the social work profession's broader goals. The discussion concludes with a call to collective action for racialized social workers and those wishing to be justice-seeking accomplices.

Keywords: academic voyeurism, social work, White supremacy

Andrea Murray-Lichtman is a clinical associate professor in the School of Social Work at the University of North Carolina and a PhD student in the social work doctoral program at Memorial University of Newfoundland. Siham Elkassem is a PhD candidate in the social work doctoral program at Memorial University of Newfoundland and a clinical social work therapist who is actively engaged in the Muslim community in London, Ontario.

Abrégé : Cet article explore le caractère insidieux du racisme et de la suprématie blanche au sein du travail social. Selon notre conceptualisation, cela comprend les pratiques institutionnalisées dans l'éducation, la recherche, la politique et la pratique du travail social. L'académie du travail social est le socle qui continue à perpétuer le racisme et le colonialisme au sein de la profession. Ancrée dans une analyse intégrative du travail social qui s'inspire à la fois de la théorie postcoloniale et de la théorie critique de la race, notre théorie est que, enracinée dans ce fondement de l'oppression, la suprématie blanche en travail social se manifeste souvent par le voyeurisme académique—le regard blanc non performatif. Nous suggérons que le voyeurisme académique au sein de l'académie du travail social fait des personnes noires, autochtones et de couleur (BIPOC) des corps à étudier, à exotiser et à théoriser, sans qu'aucun changement ou action antiraciste substantiel ne soit fait. Le voyeurisme académique soutient la position dissonante du travail social—son soutien à la justice sociale et son ambivalence simultanée envers le racisme et la suprématie blanche. La discussion s'appuie sur des fondements historiques, des recherches et des données expérientielles pour tourner le regard vers l'académie, éclairant les implications du voyeurisme académique sur les corps racisés et les objectifs plus larges de la profession du travail social. La discussion se termine par un appel à l'action collective pour les travailleuses sociales et travailleurs sociaux racisés et ceux qui souhaitent être des complices de cette quête de justice.

Mots-clés : voyeurisme académique, travail social, suprématie blanche

"AS AN ALREADY AND ALWAYS RACED WRITER, I knew that I would not, could not, reproduce the master's voice along with its assumptions of the all-knowing law of the white father" (Morrison, 2019, p. 199).

Twenty-first-century North American (and global) social work grapples with being called to fight for social justice while submerged in waters unquestionably clouded by racism (Elkassem et al., 2018; Mullings et al., 2016). Over 50 years ago, Shannon (1970) asked and answered, "Can the social work profession continue the pattern of evasiveness or afford the comfort of denial? As racial tensions increase, social workers must adapt themselves accordingly" (p. 270). How can social work education, policy, and practice move beyond claims of neutrality, voyeuristic empathy, or static reflexivity to self-examine how Whiteness manifests within the academy? In pondering this question before the 2020 emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic, we encountered deflections, requests for nuance, and academic debates over the references, the data, and evidence to substantiate our so-called claims of racism (Abrams & Moio, 2009; Bonilla-Silva, 2016, 2018; Patrick, 2020; Gregory, 2021; Zuberi & Bonilla-Silva, 2008). This debate is especially troubling, as it undermines the profession's code of ethics and the professional mandates that call to

uphold social justice (Canadian Association of Social Work [CASW], 2005; National Association of Social Work [NASW], 2017).

The social work profession's attempts to address racism focus heavily on an effort to extract the experiences and labour of Othered, oppressed groups through an academic gaze with little to no calls for systemic change or self-examination. This is a form of 'non-performativity': the act of claiming anti-racism without engaging in sufficient anti-racist actions upholds an ambivalence to Whiteness, epistemic racism, and colonialism within the academy. Academic voyeurism has been defined by anti-racist feminist scholars (Collins, 2002; Jacobs, 2004). However, for social work, this is a new theorization. We conceptualize academic voyeurism as the insidious tool used to enforce the status quo of the non-performative White gaze of the social work academy—a tool that allows observation and replication of White supremacist practices and racism without substantive change. Academic voyeurism is the act of extraction, interpretation, and non-performativity taken up by the social work academy in the form of violent cultural voyeurism performed through institutionalized practices. Academic voyeurism is the duplicitous public face of racism in social work. We must move past it to address the (in)visible entrenchment of racism in institutional social work; otherwise, we will never dislodge the ambivalence to and status quo of White supremacy. Therefore, this paper aims to reveal the unique ways in which academic voyeurism occurs within the social work academy, focusing on how it perpetuates the (in)visibility of Black, Indigenous, and People of Colour (BIPOC) scholars and communities.

We position the gaze of the academic voyeur within the site of imperialist White supremacist patriarchal capitalism (hooks, 2013; Johnstone, 2018). Claims that the academy is embedded with Whiteness ideologically (Gregory, 2021; Pewewardy, 2007) and demographically by a majority of White (female) social workers in the United States and Canada (Council on Social Work Education [CSWE], 2020) support this positioning. The White gaze of the academic voyeur renders (in)visible BIPOC scholars, practitioners, and communities as bodies to be studied, exoticized, and theorized about without any significant racial justice action occurring within the academy. The fight against systemic and institutionalized racism reawakened during the 2020 racial justice uprisings and COVID-19 pandemic call for the social work profession to be part of the solution to societal change (Roberts, 2020). Being part of this solution is only possible if the profession turns the gaze towards itself to attend to its roots in racism and colonialism, historically and contemporarily.

Our discussion is grounded in Black critical race and postcolonial theoretical frameworks; it explains how the social work academy functions as a voyeuristic arm of Whiteness, perpetuating racism. We begin by uncovering the historical roots of White supremacy in social work. Next,

we examine the ontology of academic voyeurism within Black critical race and postcolonial theoretical frameworks. We unpack academic voyeurism and its use as a White supremacist tool within social work education, research, and practice. Finally, we discuss the implications of academic voyeurism for social work by issuing a call for transformation and collective action for racialized social workers and those wishing to be justice-seeking accomplices.

Black Critical Race and Postcolonial Lenses

Black critical race and postcolonial theoretical frameworks shape our understanding of academic voyeurism in the context of racism and White supremacy in the social work academy. Postcolonial frameworks critically analyze power, institutions, and discourses produced by European colonial hegemony over those colonized, who are often BIPOC. Critical race theory (CRT) offers an approach to centre race and tackle intersecting injustices across multiple identities (Crenshaw, 1989; Hill Collins & Bilge, 2020; Robinson, 1999). As an entry point, we focus on anti-Black racism as a unifying concept in the struggle against racism and colonialism for all Black people, Indigenous people, and People of Colour. Black critical theory analyzes the racialization, marginalization, and disregard of (anti) Blackness in institutions, especially education (Dumas, 2016; Dumas & Ross, 2016). Black critical theory presupposes that Black bodies are recipients of intense forms of racism and experiences with Whiteness in the academy compared to other racialized populations (Dumas & Ross, 2016; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). Early Black theorists such as Kimberlé Crenshaw, bell hooks, and Patricia Hill Collins centred anti-Black racism, which acknowledges that, although myriad forms of oppression exist, an enduring theme in North America is the White–Black binary. Within this binary, the closer a body is to Blackness, the less chance it has to enter into the system of Whiteness, and it thereby faces the brunt of White supremacy (Alcoff, 2017; Yancy, 2017, 2018). While oppression works to exert its power to advantage differentially, "oppressions can never be equal; they differ in consequences and intensities for different bodies" (Adjei, 2013, p. 38).

CRT and postcolonial academics theorize about racializing social constructs and ideological realities by positioning racial realism, contemporary colonialism, and Whiteness as a starting point to unpacking power and privilege within institutions, particularly within the academy (Bell, 2018; Crenshaw, 1995; Fanon, 1967, 2004; Said, 1978, 1994). CRT theorists in the early 20th century, such as W. E. B. Du Bois (1903), suggested that Whiteness is not normal and must be critically analyzed. Race, while a social construct, is an ideological truth; racism permeates society and remains a grave reality (Adjei, 2013). Racialization is a process by which phenotype and other characteristics essentialize and describe

groups of people from similar ethnic, religious, or cultural groups, often to inflict racial oppression and justify colonial projects (Johnson & Enomoto, 2007; Omi & Winant, 1994). Colonialist White supremacy, defined as historical and contemporary systems of power and hegemony, racialize individual bodies, secure privilege, and maintain power differentials, especially in educational contexts (Griffin et al., 2014; Henry et al., 2017; Mills, 2007; Yosso et al., 2009). As Hughey (2016) explains, "the meaning of Whiteness varies spatially (by location), temporally (by historical eras and within the individual life span), contextually (by the relative culture), differentially (by power), and intersectionality (by combination with class, gender, sexual orientation, and so forth)" (p. 212).

CRT scholars propose that social work literature that focuses on racialized populations is often presented with superficial anti-racist approaches, concentrating heavily on micro-level interventions that only emphasize cultural awareness, and is limited in its discussion of institutionalized racism and change (Azzopardi & McNeill, 2016; Corley & Young, 2018; Pon, 2007). Researchers conducting a content analysis of social work literature over the past 30 years reveal that the vast majority of this literature fails to address power dynamics, structural inequality, and institutional racism that impact racialized populations' lives (Corley & Young, 2018; McMahon & Allen-Meares, 1992). They believe this reifies racism in its exclusion and serves "no less than a validation of the inequitable status quo" (McMahon & Allen-Meares, 1992, p. 535), claiming the "profession of social work is still racist" (Corley & Young, 2018, p. 317). This has been supported by scholars who claim the profession continues to pay lip service to issues of racism and systemic inequality (Banks et al., 2017; Blackstock, 2009; Bowles & Hopps, 2014; Briggs et al., 2018; Gregory, 2021; Schiele & Hopps, 2009). The following discussion details how racism, colonialism, and social work's dissonant positions lay the foundation for academic voyeurism in the social work academy.

Social Work and White Supremacy

Social work developed within a system of White supremacy and of racist and colonial ideology (Beck, 2019; Chapman & Withers, 2019; Dominelli, 1997; Edwards et al., 2006; Fortier & Wong, 2019; Pewewardy & Almeida, 2014; Schiele, 2000). An assessment of social work's historical context found political, social, and economic influences aligned to determine social welfare policy, which shaped the profession's development (Cox et al., 2018). Formalized social welfare and social work development in North America was conceived within the merciless colonization that decimated BIPOC populations for White settler communities to flourish. Black communities' recourse against colonization and marginalization was mutual aid, self-help groups, and religious charity that grew from

within their communities (Carlton-LaNey, 2001; Este et al., 2017). The social control that perpetrated violence against Indigenous Others and concretized anti-Black racism through the social construction of race was woven into the fabric of social work, creating a parallel system of doing 'good' while perpetuating social injustice as the arm of the state (Johnstone, 2018; McRae, 2018). The crux of this discussion lies in the charge that the social work academy still struggles with racism and colonialist White supremacy, and has not adapted itself or reached the pinnacle of the code of ethics, grand challenges, or values that it asserts (Blackstock 2009; CASW, 2005; Chapman & Withers, 2019; NASW, 2017; Roberts, 2020). Instead, the profession is still bound to these forms of oppression, often exemplified within the social work academy through academic voyeurism.

The Ontology of Academic Voyeurism

Our definition of academic voyeurism is rooted in the postcolonial critique of cultural voyeurism as a form of discursive and literary imperialism enacted through social scientific endeavours. Cultural voyeurism is part of the legacy of positivist and post-positivist violence that was committed in the name of social science and that has cast an exotic view of the Other in its attempts at cultural understanding (Clifford, 1988; Minh-ha, 1989; Tuhiwai-Smith, 2013). Edward Said (1993) proposed that this form of cultural imperialism extracts knowledge while, at the same time, exerting considerable influence through social scientific positioning in research and literary projects. These critiques uncover racist colonial discourses that privilege and encourage White Western knowledge production while subjugating racialized communities' knowledge as a tool of oppression and group-based exclusion (Said, 1993; Tuhiwai-Smith, 2013).

Academic voyeurism is situated in the connection between imperialism, extraction, and representation of assumed knowledge of other cultures within the social work academy. Coupled with traditional definitions of voyeurism—the act of extracting something of value by observing the Other for gratification and achievement (Merriam-Webster Dictionary, n.d.)—academic voyeurism is laden with unequal power within an academic exchange for social scientific purposes. Academic voyeurism enacts forms of cultural imperialism to understand the cultures of Others through a Western White gaze, which, according to postcolonial scholars, cannot think outside of imperialist systems of extractions and representation (Said, 1993; Tuhiwai-Smith, 2013). Consequently, we suggest that the social work academy utilizes the "the power to narrate or to block other narratives from forming and emerging" (Said, 1993, p. xiii) without acknowledging the hegemony of Whiteness—"the practice, the theory, and the attitudes of a dominating metropolitan" (p. 9)— which exists within the profession, working to extract, appropriate, and

contradict the lived reality of BIPOC people.

Academic voyeurism prevails as a contentious and pervasive issue in academia with implications for inflicting epistemic violence against those studied. The social sciences—sociology, anthropology, and psychology—have historically been a site of deliberate, recurrent, and legitimized efforts to extract information about another culture or from Othered cultural phenomenon (Said, 1993; Tuhiwai-Smith, 2013). Such extraction is most often taken up as a project to see BIPOC, but always through the lens of Whiteness, and not on BIPOC peoples' own terms (Jani et al., 2011). The risk is that the researcher's background assumptions become institutionalized meanings, which have historically inflicted White supremacist colonial ideologies that cause considerable harm to BIPOC people and communities. What does it mean when this occurs through the embodiment of Whiteness and enacted within the academy?

Through academic voyeurism's non-performative White gaze, researchers, educators, and practitioners inflict violence upon BIPOC people and communities, rendering them (in)visible. Historically, the academy has been the White gaze's purveyor (Ahmed, 2007, 2009; Bannerji, 1995; Bilge, 2020; Morrison, 2019; Razack, 2007). According to Fanon (1967, 2004), when academics study and observe those they have Othered, the Othered peoples' difference is excluded, exotified, and deemed "wretched" from a vantage point that supports colonization. Ani (1994) contends that the European and Western academy built its epistemological and ontological origins on the objective knowing being who gathered knowledge from non-experiential "facts," thus demonizing ways of knowing and being that were centrally non-European, African, and Indigenous. The academy is still linked to a European philosophical gaze, which surveils and denies the history, humanity, and knowledge production of racialized bodies (Morrison, 2019; Feagin, 2013).

Critical race and postcolonial theorists advocate for epistemic disobedience that encourages knowledge production, validation, and dissemination (that is, research and scholarship) outside the White gaze (Mignolo, 2009; Morrison, 2019; Tuhiwai-Smith, 2013). For example, Morrison (2019) noted that, although the White gaze may have the power to diminish Black voices, as an act of epistemic disobedience, she would never give up explaining what she thinks and believes to her readers. Despite acts of epistemic disobedience from BIPOC scholars, little has changed to subvert completely the power of Whiteness to maintain its gaze on the scholarship of racialized bodies (Bonilla-Silva, 2018). Whiteness still surveils and often casts racialized knowledge production as deficient, subjective, atheoretical, and fictional (Almeida, 2013, 2015; Feagin, 2013; Gregory, 2021). White bodies and those performing Whiteness are posited with credibility, discursive power, and authorial control (Bonilla-Silva, 2018; Feagin, 2013; Leonardo, 2013; Yancy, 2017, 2018) over decisions that define humanity, research, and scholarship (Ladson-Billings, 2003).

Consequently, such voices empowered by Whiteness and White hegemony often determine what is researched, who is researched, and who is allowed to research, thereby shaping a master protocol that sanctions the doctrine of Whiteness and racism (Ladson-Billings, 2003). This can create a conflicting situation for racialized academics as they are called to perform Whiteness to survive the academy.

Academic Voyeurism in Social Work

Social work distinguishes itself from other professions by its social justice ambitions (Blackstock, 2009; CASW, 2005; Goldstein, 1990; Margolin, 1997; NASW, 2017) coupled with its scientific goals (Chapman & Withers, 2019). Paradoxically, social work seeks to enact social justice under the scrutiny of the White gaze. Indeed, racialized social work students and faculty experience racial violence in the academy as a microcosm of society (Badwall, 2014; Banks et al., 2017; Briggs et al., 2018). This manifests within social work spaces that have not fully addressed racism, power, and privilege (Abrams & Moio, 2009; Gregory, 2021; Johnstone, 2018; Lavalette & Penketh, 2014). We theorize that academic voyeurism in social work allows the White gaze to scrutinize the suffering, pain, and violence of racism as reflected in the social situations it researches, the classroom dialogues it initiates, and the practice dynamics it creates. Academic voyeurism is the public face of racism incongruously hidden behind claims to uphold social justice. The following subsections describe how academic voyeurism manifests within social work. Finn (2021) asserts that the same philosophy was the genesis of US and Canadian social work. Therefore, we offer a transnational view that analyzes the underpinnings sustaining academic voyeurism in the United States and Canada.

The Non-Performative White Gaze: A Reification of White Supremacy

Policy Statements on Racism

In her analyses of acts of non-performativity within institutions (i.e., schools of social work, professional associations) through solidarity statements, claims, and missions, Sara Ahmed (2004; 2016) inspires us to call on social work to turn its gaze inward. Non-performativity involves acts of naming, which reinforces the idea that the institution is a place where democracy, civility, equal opportunity, and social justice occur. These words ascribe attributes, qualities, and even a character to institutions. Ahmed (2004) refers to these as "speech acts" (p. 1), which include writing, speaking, and visual images that support claims about the institution committing to a course of action. Such statements or speech acts do not do what they say. Instead, they are insincere and non-performative, as the speech act does not turn an institution's past discursive commitments into action-oriented responses. On the other

hand, Judith Butler argues, "performativity must be understood not as a singular or deliberate 'act,' but, rather as the reiterative and citational practice by which discourse *produces the effects that it names"* (1993, p. 2). We theorize that—after years of non-performative speech acts of social justice, anti-oppressive practice, and cultural competence training—social work discourse has not produced the effect it names, as evidenced by numerous social work scholars who have made this claim (Beck, 2019; Crudup et al., 2021; Keenan et al., 2021). In other words, the North American social work codes of ethics and professional mandates to pursue social justice have become little more than echoes in a chamber of Whiteness with little will to unseat itself.

Anti-Oppressive, Cultural Competency, and Critical Consciousness

Social work has struggled for years to answer claims of racism and White supremacy substantively. Each attempt at a response has reified rather than dismantled White supremacy (Almeida, 2013, 2015; Beck, 2019; Pewewardy & Almeida, 2014). Liberal social workers' philosophical shift to embrace anti-oppressive practices, critical consciousness, and reflexivity keeps them comfortable without having to look too deeply into how their actions contribute to ongoing White supremacy (Beck, 2019; Danso, 2018; Mullaly, 2010; Pon, 2007, 2009; Pon et al., 2016; Sakamoto & Pitner, 2005). Anti-oppressive practitioners' social justice and equity considerations across a wide range of differences produce a leveling and equalizing of oppressions that hinder anti-racist interventions. Although it attempts to dismantle all oppressions on an even playing field, advocates of these perspectives fail to explain how such an ambiguous entry point can sincerely engage in race and racism issues. This ambiguity is perpetuated by colour-blind approaches to social work practice that do not take up issues of race, therefore eclipsing issues of racism and White supremacy in practice (Gregory, 2021; Pon et al., 2016; Maglalang & Rao, 2021; Schiele, 2007). This struggle within social work to embody its values has left social work without the capacity to lead on social justice issues outside the academy (Murray-Lichtman & Levine, 2019). Amid countless attempts at cultural competence and the equalizing of oppressions, social work has not made any substantive changes within its organizational structures, implicit mission, or explicit capacity as an arm of the state (CASW, 2005; Chapman & Withers, 2019; Jani et al., 2011; NASW, 2017; Reisch, 2007; Roberts, 2020). Pewewardy and Almeida (2014) have argued that social work's conscious investment in a multicultural or cultural competency diversity lens will never unseat White supremacy. Singh (2019) proposes that current social work approaches only ask that students move to a place of critical self-reflection or "magical consciousness, where racism and racial oppression is invisible," (p. 1) leaving this issue unchallenged and shrouding the profession with silence and denial. In essence, academic

voyeurism—that ability and directive to see suffering without ever having to reckon with complicity—has kept White supremacy intact.

Colour-Blind White Supremacy

Along with discursive practices, academic voyeurism is maintained by colour-blind liberal approaches that reinforce positions of benevolence and civility under a guise of kindness which aims to surveil and keeps bodies in line with White supremacy in social work (Applebaum, 2005; Cabrera, 2012; Hollingsworth et al., 2018). The profession still houses an ambivalence toward anti-colonial, anti-racist, critical Whiteness, and Indigenous perspectives (Applebaum, 2005; Badwall, 2014; Beck, 2019; Blackstock, 2009; Chapman & Withers, 2019; Dumbrill & Yee, 2019; Edwards et al., 2006; Fellows & Razack, 1998; Fortier & Wong, 2019; Gregory, 2021; Margolin, 1997). It allows social workers' White gazes to scrutinize the Othered without ever moving to action (Jeffery, 2005; Jeyasingham, 2012).

From the classroom to faculty meetings, academic voyeurism allows White social workers to engage in a dissonant colour-blind approach, viewing the social and emotional labour of BIPOC colleagues and students, and bearing witness to their pain without having to be changed by it. While BIPOC testimonies of racial trauma may motivate some White people to action (Singh, 2019), this dynamic reinforces a power hierarchy in which White social workers benefit from the unpaid labour of BIPOC people. Whether it is the account of pain from racist community violence aimed to kill BIPOC people, or the racist attacks within the academy seeking to silence BIPOC scholars, White social workers get a badge for diversity and inclusion efforts (i.e., equity training), for showing up without ever having to move beyond discourse to action. Black social work students report racism as a significant problem in social work contexts (Singh, 2006), while White social workers often work unquestioningly in practice education settings with an ambivalence towards (anti)racism (Penketh, 2000; Singh, 2019).

The social work profession uses White supremacy through academic voyeurism to maintain power over the bodies that it rewards, disciplines, and pushes out of education (Bhatti-Sinclair & Bailey, 2010; Jeyasingham, 2012; Lavalette & Penketh, 2014). Colour-blindness allows for a White body to fill the seat without ever taking up the challenge of equity and inclusion. Banks et al.'s (2017) study of deans' racial identities in social work schools across the United States revealed very few racialized deans, demonstrating the same colour-blind entrenchment of White women and men's power. Banks et al.'s (2017) study showed that deans (54% women, 46% men) were overwhelmingly White, 18% African American, 8% Asian, and 2% Latino. Whether in hiring and promotion practices, or the creation of leadership roles, Whiteness hovers over the trajectories of

BIPOC scholars. As with everyday White supremacist violence, this is not a secret—as Paul Adjei (2013) argues, White supremacy is not hidden.

Academic voyeurism provides cover for White supremacy to flourish under the guise of colour-blind meritocracy, whereby BIPOC scholars and students are deemed the problem and punished when they speak out. Anecdotal evidence (Pewewardy & Almeida, 2014) reveals these practices among NASW chapters, who punished advocates for anti-racist change talk by replacing them with voices carrying a message that entrenches White supremacy. This illustrates how academic voyeurism surveils and disciplines BIPOC scholars and students for anti-racist work with little regard for its actions' transparency, all the while patting itself on the back for upholding social justice. The inherent hypocrisy thrives under the hegemony of Whiteness. While some governing bodies, such as the CASWE-ACFTS, may make room for equity and inclusion, questions arise about what explicit action ensures the representation of Black bodies. Applebaum (2010) surmises that this hegemonic system's supposed "White ignorance" occurs when Whites fail to link their benefits with White supremacy, thus maintaining their complicity. Adjei (2013) calls that ignorance into question, categorizing it as "strategic colorblindness" (p. 38). Indeed, White supremacy is hidden around us in plain sight. Academic voyeurism aids in the White gaze in social work, allowing individuals to believe that White bodies earned their position based on merit and BIPOC people experience immobility due to a lack of merit. As Adjei (2013) suggests, individuals' everyday actions result in systemic oppression and White supremacy; we are all complicit in this system. So, in response to Applebaum (2010), perhaps the DuBoisian (1935) assessment still holds: the "wages of Whiteness" are such that White bodies and BIPOC people admitted into Whiteness decide complicity is in their best interests.

Academic Voyeurism as (In)visibility of BIPOC Scholars in the Curriculum

Academic voyeurism, as the tool of the White gaze, seeks to disparage the work of racialized groups to sustain itself. This occurs in the academy through racist and colonialist ontology and epistemology, which values Eurocentric ideology over non-Eurocentric systems (Orelus, 2013; Sleeter, 2017). Institutional structures and procedures in the academy denigrate the work of BIPOC scholars by utilizing its gaze to view their work as specialized and not applicable to what social work students need or want to learn. This happens when content and curriculum concerning BIPOC perspectives are relegated to the space of elective courses, and topics on systemic oppression are scarce, with little to no focus on issues of race and racism (Almeida, 2019; Corley & Young, 2018; Olcoń et al., 2020). There is a lack of visibility around racialized academics' contributions listed within

course syllabi and historical renditions of the profession (Beck, 2019; Gregory, 2021). Academic voyeurism operates from a position of power and insidious logic, prioritizing courses rooted in Eurocentrism under the guise of best practice in education (Corley & Young, 2018; Fortier & Wong, 2019; Margolin, 1997; Penketh, 2000). Critical race scholars draw attention to the "hidden curriculum of hegemony" (Jay, 2003, p. 3), reinforcing social inequalities and enabling schools to socialize students to focus on the dominant groups' interests. Although representations of social justice may operate as an institutional value (i.e., the explicit curriculum), institutional practices simultaneously reproduce racial and other societal hierarchies (i.e., lack of a diverse student body and faculty) (Ahmed, 2012; Bhuyan et al., 2017; Deepak et al., 2015). This disparages the work of BIPOC scholars by failing to challenge gatekeeping practices in social work and perpetuating the racist reframe of the inferiority of their contributions (Corley & Young, 2018; Penketh, 2000). Feagin (2013) proposed that racial realities are rarely, if ever, vigorously researched by social scientists. This research's paucity is related to the need to conform to gatekeeping funders and decision-makers' predispositions. These racist practices relegate and denigrate BIPOC scholars' contributions while taxing racialized faculty and students when it is convenient for the institution to extol its diversity efforts. Academic voyeurism allows the White gaze to pull in that which sustains White supremacy and relegates the voices that speak against it to the periphery.

Academic Voyeurism as (In)visibility of BIPOC People in the Classroom

The social work profession distinguishes Whiteness as expert and diminishes Others through the process of academic voyeurism. This inequitable divide is created and maintained through contemporary and historical literature on immigration, integration, cultural competency, and anti-oppressive practice (Abrams & Moio, 2009; Badwall, 2014; Chapman & Withers, 2019; Edwards et al., 2006; Fortier & Wong, 2019; Pon, 2007, 2009). Although this form of Whiteness can be rooted in the sincere hope for socially just and anti-oppressive ways of working with racialized groups, it is without critical reflection on Eurocentrism and Whiteness's invisibility. While there are exceptions that demonstrate CASWE-ACFTS, CSWE, and NASW invest in some anti-racist actions within social work education and practice (this special issue being one such action), academic voyeurism is maintained. We submit that if White supremacy is universal within the profession and anti-racist action is 'special' and not the norm, the social work profession cannot rest on its anti-racism efforts, as existing efforts fall short of making a sustained change. Applebaum (2006) cautions against furthering White complicity by attestations that are designed to give us a shield behind which we can feel good about

ourselves or our anti-racism attempts if White supremacy is still the order of the day. Applebaum (2015) considers the intractability of complicity in White supremacy through the acts of innocence and ignorance whereby naming good anti-racist deeds are called forth to allow individuals to distance themselves from their complicity in White supremacy. In other words, the social work profession succeeds in collecting non-performative points that offer the façade of diversity, progression, and innovation while relegating racialized groups as exotic Others.

Academic voyeurism in the social work academy seeks to centre Whiteness and White supremacy through its gaze of theorizing and practice, making race visible at an individual level while simultaneously maintaining racism's invisibility at the systemic level. The approaches used to understand the oppressions of BIPOC people often centre Whiteness in the process of critical self-reflection and consciousness (Danso, 2018; Hick et al., 2005; Pon, 2007; Sakamoto & Pitner, 2005). Blackwell (2010) discussed this when reflecting on using Whiteness theory as a pedagogical intervention concerned with bringing White students into consciousness about racism and White privilege, and examining the effect of racial identity politics on classroom interactions. The literature reveals that this approach's current conceptualization and practice hold few benefits for students of colour. Blackwell (2010) suggested cultivating an anti-oppressive educational environment for all students is undermined by the preoccupation with Whiteness and White students. Thus, in both theory and practice, students of colour are often rendered invisible on the sidelines, or their personal stories are used to benefit White students and White educators. Scholar–practitioners in this field have not adequately considered what counts as anti-racist education for students of colour. An analysis of education conducted by Singh (2019) revealed that addressing Black social workers' experiences in White organizational spaces and enabling them to develop strategies to respond to institutional and overt forms of racism were not areas of teaching identified in content and learning outcomes of anti-racist education. Such gaps may have consequences for how Black students develop strategies to challenge and navigate microaggressions in practice education and classroom settings (Spencer, 2018).

Within the classroom, BIPOC students are surveilled and harmed as their experience is examined and dissected to teach White students while allowing White liberal faculty to feel good about facilitating a civil discussion (Blackwell, 2010; Brady et al., 2016; Hollingsworth et al., 2018; Olcoń et al., 2020). Similarly, racialized faculty have little means to help themselves or racialized students to mediate the academic voyeurism of the White gaze (Allen et al., 2018; Applebaum, 2005; Smith & Roberts, 2007). Issahaku (2010) explains, "In North America, my racialized status makes me available for the white gaze and racist discipline" (p. 29). Often, racialized faculty and students' experiences with White supremacy and

White fragility are met with questioning or denial from administrators (Daniel, 2019). In the classroom, BIPOC faculty and students pay a sort of triple fine. As such, they face the attacks that emanate from White fragility and the punishment that comes with the administration's support of those White students, while having to watch both work as accomplices in maintaining the White supremacist status quo (Hollingsworth et al., 2018; Smith & Roberts, 2007). Racialized faculty and students often navigate between the dissonance of knowing that the space does not affirm racialized bodies and the conviction that scholarly activism is the mantle that they must assume, all the while enduring the associated stress, trauma, and violence (Arnold et al., 2016; Ford, 2020; Hartlep & Ball, 2020; Hayes, 2020; Palmer, 2020). It contributes to the racial battle fatigue experienced by BIPOC people (Gildersleeve et al., 2011; Smith, 2008; Solem et al., 2009; Solórzano et al., 2000). The literature reveals that BIPOC encounter racism on university campuses regularly, with significantly stronger consequences for Black students and academics (Daniel, 2019; Canadian Association of University Teachers, 2018; Gildersleeve et al., 2011; Smith, 2008; Solem et al., 2009; Solórzano et al., 2000).

It is also important to acknowledge an underexamined area and lack of research around BIPOC scholars who have internalized White supremacist values that denigrate racialized bodies. As mentioned above, those conforming to and internalizing Whiteness in the academy are posited with value and knowledge (Bonilla-Silva, 2018; Feagin, 2013; Leonardo, 2013). These internalized values may enhance their career trajectory, yet often demand a higher price for racialized students and colleagues. For example, racialized scholars who perpetuate Whiteness in their work as a form of self-preservation may internalize deficit-laden beliefs and inappropriately impose different academic standards for racialized students and impose gatekeeping standards for scholars who are actively seeking to unseat racism and Whiteness through anti-racist and anti-colonial scholarship. Whether faculty, students, or practitioners, BIPOC social workers complicit in Whiteness serve to maintain White supremacy (Hayes, 2020). They are rewarded for their complicity and are showcased as a testament to colour-blind meritocracy.

Implications for Social Work

Academic voyeurism, the public face of racism, is an inherent part of the social work academy maintaining the dissonant social justice claim without substantive anti-racist action. Racialized faculty and students have wisdom, knowledge, histories, theories, scholarship, and activism—and their perspectives matter. White dominance in the academy privileges and empowers White bodies and White morals, politics, and cultures. White supremacy is intellectually, physically, and emotionally destructive, and it

continues to be a barrier to creating solutions for critical social problems. The self-maintaining and self-producing nature of White supremacy in the academy limits potential contributions to social work education, theory, and practice. White supremacy suppresses BIPOC scholars' innovation, creating a double consciousness of reality, thought, and ideology in the minds of racialized bodies.

Racialized scholars have called upon the profession to address issues of racism and White supremacy in social work in the United States (Almeida et al., 2019; Banks et al., 2017; Gregory, 2021) and Canada (Badwall, 2014; Fellows & Razack, 1998; Pon et al., 2016). There are Canadian Indigenous and American Black social work schools working towards decolonization and anti-racist practice (Baskin, 2009; Hart et al., 2009; Dyson & Brice, 2016), and White social workers who have worked against their interests for anti-racist social work practice (Reynolds, 1991). Though subjected to Whiteness's racist epistemic pushback, both serve as a testament to the will to change White supremacy, and social work can learn from these examples. Yet still, the hegemony of Whiteness within the academy continues to silence these discourses.

Institutional Policy Changes

An anti-racist and postcolonialist approach to policy and education could include moving beyond non-performative statements and substantively addressing issues of racism and White supremacy. Accreditation standards, association values, and hiring, educational, and research practices must include anti-racist action as a central value. Dedication to anti-racism as a value is reflected in policies that substantiate and require anti-racist change. Individuals cannot accomplish this alone. In some social work institutions, even anti-racism discourses are not the norm and result in White fragility and disciplinary actions. While individual social workers may seek to promote racial justice, they continue to struggle within larger systems of the profession that often push back against anti-racist action. Anti-racist action demands the willingness of professional bodies and White practitioners to invoke anti-racist requirements, cede power, and challenge complicity within themselves and institutions to generate changes. Explicit action generated by the proposals of people most often impacted by racism—racialized communities, social work professionals, and scholars—is the first step. Accomplices should carry the labour to unlearn and eliminate racism and White supremacy among White people—students, colleagues, and communities. Social work associations and accrediting bodies can lead in these instances and are the best hope for change. Social work associations and organization conferences must make anti-racism a continual platform. However, individuals (accomplices and racialized leaders) must become the groundswell that insists on anti-racist actions.

Anti-Racist Curricuum

In our current social and political climate, social work programs need to include the study of institutional racism, White privilege, and White supremacy in social work education and curricula to adequately prepare students for the field (Abrams & Moio, 2009; Pon et al., 2016). Policies that explicitly require racialized academics' historical and contemporary contributions should be included throughout every class in the curriculum (Beck, 2019; Giwa & Mihalicz, 2019; Gregory, 2021). The current historical renditions of the profession uphold the erasure of racialized contributions to social work.

Anti-Racism in Representation

Hiring practices, admission standards, and board membership should require representation from racialized populations who have been adversely impacted by social work as a profession. Social work organizations should take active positions to invite BIPOC social work professionals and community members to leadership positions in work that impacts BIPOC communities. Social work organizations can lift and applaud the voices of racialized people and accomplices who are caught performing anti-racist action.

Anti-Racism in Practice

We should move beyond colour-blind approaches and non-performative statements in practice and centre the dismantling of systemic racism and Whiteness at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels of practice. For example, there is an overrepresentation of BIPOC children in the child welfare system (Clarke, 2015; Dettlaff, 2020; Pon et al., 2011; Saraceno, 2012) and of BIPOC youth and adults in the justice system (Calero et al., 2017); in medicine, we also see racialized children receiving over-diagnosis of disruptive disorders (Mayes & Rafalovich, 2007; Ramirez, 1999). Anti-racist practice begins with anti-racism education and field experiences that challenge the status quo of outcomes in service delivery and include practice policies implemented to support those overrepresented in social work services and impacted by social work's past actions.

Anti-Racism in Research

Centering BIPOC scholars' contributions to social work and knowledge about service to the community should be featured as a regular occurrence in journals, not just reserved for special editions. Professional bodies should prioritize research that interrogates racism and White supremacy issues in the curriculum, classroom, and community, and investigates racialized practitioners' experiences with racism in service delivery (Badwall, 2014). Further research and evidence are needed to

understand the experiences of BIPOC communities and social workers who are subjected to academic voyeurism through the White gaze; this research may help to determine strategies to move those who take up this stance away from voyeur to accomplice.

Conclusion

Academic voyeurism is neither benign nor civil, having damaged countless lives in the academy and practice. Our silence is violence, and it neither calls for justice nor keeps racialized bodies safe (Lorde, 2007); instead, inaction entrenches norms and perpetuates racism and White supremacy. White supremacy is maintained by complicity and silence. Baldwin (1985), Lorde (2007), and Feagin (2013) warn that speaking out carries consequences, and most are silent to keep their career trajectories intact. This points to an opportunity for social work leadership, as the greatest threat to the social work profession moving forward may well be the silence that accepts academic voyeurism as the *de facto* approach instead of denouncing White supremacy and the racism that it cloaks.

We cannot disrupt academic voyeurism without disrupting our complicity, which may come at personal and professional risk—especially in a space that rewards the maintenance of racism and White supremacy. The reawakened global fight for social justice and the call for social work provides a moral and ethical case for substantive anti-racist changes and opportunity for institutional growth.

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