



# **Becoming an Antiracist Educator**

**The Life and Work of  
Timothy J. Stanley**

**Edited by Nicholas Ng-A-Fook and Mark T. S. Currie**

University of Ottawa Press

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Portrait of Timothy Stanley taken in front  
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This volume is an invitation, a call, to continue the conversations that Timothy J. Stanley has so thoughtfully and generously opened for each of us to take up for those who strive to become antiracist educators.

## INTRODUCTION

# Toward Becoming an Antiracist Educator

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Nicholas Ng-A-Fook and Mark T. S. Currie

Increasingly I find that an adequate account of racism does not fit within the predominant nationalist framework that shapes most historical writing about Canada. Nationalist histories have not only failed to explain racisms; they have failed to adequately document racisms and their consequences. (Stanley, 2000, p. 80)

This collection was five years in the making. With each year of its development, rather than be concerned with it losing relevancy—becoming disconnected from changes in social, cultural, and political meanings over time—we found the contributions of its messaging to be ever increasing. While putting this collection together, statues of (mostly white, male) colonizers and people who enslaved fellow human beings racialized as Black people have been covered in red paint and toppled in several protests against the societal honouring of racists and genocidal murderers. In Canada, various statues of John A. Macdonald across the country, Egerton Ryerson in Toronto, and Queen Victoria in Montreal, were all subject to these acts of disapproval. In countering these efforts, however, we heard the arguments that removing such historical commemorations is erasing our settler colonial nation-state formation, that times were different back then, that nobody is perfect, and that we should not let a few undesirable decisions overshadow the “good” things these individuals did for nation building.

While these commemoration wars took place, we also witnessed the rise in the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement and the rallying cry of “Defund the Police.” The movement and the demand for defunding gained momentum as a response to over-policing, over-incarceration, and killing of Indigenous, Black, and people of colour (IBPOC) at the hands of law enforcement officers across North America (for discussions of this, see Cole, 2020, and Maynard, 2017). “Defund the Police” was a call to redistribute funding and restructure support systems such that members of the public would receive the appropriate services—not automatically the police—for the circumstances they experience. One example is that people should be able to request a mental health professional to conduct a wellness check for loved ones, rather than the police (now symbols of conflict) leading the check, and in turn, creating anxiety simply with their presence. Again, much like those opposed to removing statues, not everyone was in favour of defunding the police. In both Canada and the United States, “Thin Blue Line” flags were created as symbols to honour fallen police officers. These flags, which are grey-scale versions of the national flags with a blue horizontal line through the middle of the flag, have morphed in meaning from being a symbol to honour fallen officers to taking the side of the police in what has become a battle between nation-state sponsored policing and protecting of racialized communities. Supporters of the police are not necessarily in favour of killing anyone, no matter what their racialized identity is, and rather, are believers that police keep communities safe. Despite official reports showing the disproportionate number of IBPOC communities being wrongfully detained (or much worse) by the police, the police supporters maintain that it is not a systemic problem, and it is just a few bad apples.

Adding to the events of the recent past, around the same time as the statue-toppling and BLM efforts, in May 2021, at the site of the former Kamloops residential school that operated from 1890 to 1969 in Kamloops, British Columbia, Canada, over two hundred unmarked graves of Indigenous children were recovered (Dickson, 2022). Since this time, more than 1,700 unmarked graves have been identified through investigations at seven former residential school sites (Luo, 2022). Even before the unmarked graves were found, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (2015) had already confirmed that at least 3,200 Indigenous children died while attending the federally funded residential schooling system. The residential schooling

system, which subjected First Nations, Inuit, and Métis children to horrendous abuses and was a tool of Indigenous genocide, did not officially close its last school until the late 1990s (Canadian Encyclopedia, 2022). Efforts toward truth and then reconcilia(c)tions are ongoing, and positive strides are being made, but the intergenerational legacy of trauma persists (see <https://nctr.ca/>). Residential school Survivors and their families continue to feel the pain of systemic and targeted anti-Indigenous racisms (see <https://fncaringociety.com/spirit-bear/spirit-bear-virtual-school>).

During the editing of this book, the world faced the Covid-19 global pandemic, which has risen and fallen in numerous waves of intensity but has not and likely will not fully disappear. Throughout the frustrations and uncertainties of illness, community lockdowns, and mask mandates, many people sought explanations and, in some cases, to place blame on someone or somewhere for the new, unwanted challenges and changes to society. With news reports early in the pandemic showing that the first recorded cases of the virus occurred in China, the country became a scapegoat (Taylor, 2021). Anti-Asian racism was not new, but this type of racism took on a new form. People racialized as Asian, regardless of place of birth or nationality, were increasingly accosted and told they were responsible for putting the world into the pandemic. More and more reports surfaced about people racialized as Asian being told to “go back to China” and that “all Chinese people should go to jail” (Neufeld, 2020), in addition to being physically attacked in an increasing number of instances (Nicholson, 2021).

As recent political interventions in both the United States and Canada seek to dismantle antiracist education and diversity, equity, and inclusive excellence initiatives, Timothy Stanley’s scholarship continues to offer critical insights into these developments. Stanley’s scholarship illustrates how educational institutions have historically embedded racism into their structures, often under the guise of neutrality or the banality of everyday racisms. For example, the Trump administration’s aggressive actions—such as freezing federal funds to universities resisting the elimination of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) programs—and similar policy shifts in Canadian provinces like Alberta, exemplify attempts to suppress efforts that confront societal, systemic, and individual forms of racisms. Such contemporary challenges underscore Stanley’s assertion that dismantling racist structures requires an ongoing conscious and deliberate effort to

acknowledge and address the historical foundations of inequality both inside and outside of our educational systems.

The list could go on, and, indeed, people's stories should be shared with a wider public audience. Our point with such contemporary examples, though, is that experiencing different types of racism is far from dead, and antiracist education informed by history education go hand in hand. How the events and challenges of today scale in comparison to struggles and triumphs of the past is not for us to say. It is not a competition over who had it worse or who overcame the most. We need a stronger engagement with our relationships to what happened in the past, what is said to have happened in the past, and what is happening in the present (Trouillot, 1995). We need better recognition and consideration of ourselves in relation to our temporal, spatial, and social contexts. These are just some of the curricular and pedagogical strategies we can (un)learn to embody in our everyday interactions as educators and fellow citizens through Stanley's groundbreaking antiracist education scholarship.

The authors featured throughout the following pages come from experiences and positions that span Canada and connect to many places around the world. They represent intergenerational scholarship, ranging from some who have worked in academia for many years to some who are just stepping into their careers in academic, government, and community sectors. Across the board, though, one common element between them is that Stanley has influenced them, helped shape their work, and provided guidance in the fields of history, teacher education, and antiracist education. This collection is a thank-you of sorts to Stanley for all the racial and social justice work he has taken up over his career and for everything he has generously shared with us. More than that, though, this collection is our effort to pass on to wider and future audiences some formative lessons that all scholars can and should learn from his antiracist education scholarship.

Throughout this book, we aim to engage the following question: Who is Dr. Timothy J. Stanley? When speaking with Stanley about his lived experiences and their connections to the development of his work, he shared:

Early on, I sort of understood that teaching was something that I enjoy doing and that I'm about. And particularly, as I got involved in the antiracist movement, I realized that there was a

need to teach people about racism and its consequences [...] as time has gone on more and more, this is what I do and what I've become and how I've come to define myself.

His journey to this form of himself, as he describes, has been peppered with key moments that guided, if not pushed him to take up such antiracist education work.

With his classes of teacher candidates, Stanley shared the story of being in Grade 5 and hearing a classmate use racist language, and then watching and listening to his teacher's response. Miss Sorg declared to the whole class that such language will not be acceptable in her class and that "whether you are the Queen of Sheba or the King of Siam, as far as I am concerned, we're all the same on the inside." Since they had recently done a lesson on the organs of the human body, he recalls an experiment of going around the room and imagining slicing people open and watching their insides spill out and seeing that "we really are all the same inside." Indeed, in the world of racism, the "we're all the same" argument alone does little to dismantle individual, systemic, or societal exclusions. His story, however, shows a (perhaps unintentional) planting of seeds that clearly grew into his careful historical and contemporary formulations of racializations, racisms, exclusions, and strategic antiracist curricular and pedagogical responses. If we are all the same on the inside, how and why did the racialized categories of *race* come to be?

The argument Stanley (2011) makes is that racism creates *race*—not the other way around—by applying labels and meanings to the differences we see between ourselves and other people. The process of racialization occurs when people are categorized into labelled groups (i.e., *race*) based on features (e.g., skin colour, culture, religion, place of origin, or language) that are deemed to be *differences*. Stanley (2012b) explains that "processes of cultural representation, knowledge-making, and social organization make 'race'" (p. 216). Expanding on this idea, he states that "'race' differences may appear natural, constant, and obvious, but they are in fact extremely dynamic and contextually specific. What is obvious in one time and place can be simply invisible in another" (p. 216). A key point to understand from Stanley's discussion is that racialization is always relational; categories of *race* are created in relation to other people. Furthermore, "even though over time people may adopt racialized categories as their own, racializations are always inescapable ascriptions" (p. 216).

Stanley emphasizes that the way people identify is indeed important, but understanding how a racialized category came to be will inevitably involve recognizing that category's relationship with another racialized category in terms of the privileges or exclusions they create for us and for others.

In varying contexts, different racializations are read and made to feel to greater or lesser degrees that they belong or are excluded. Throughout Stanley's (2012b) work, there is extensive investigation into the observation that "people's bodies, and hence the extent to which they are alleged to belong within the imagined community of the nation, are read in relation to myriad representations that constitute the landscape of collective remembering" (p. 215). The landscape across Canada is dominated by settler colonial markers that are normalized and appear permanent (e.g., English-language and anglicized street names and signs; streets and buildings named after white, often male people; paved streets in grid patterns that work to control and delineate private and public properties; infrastructure that supports the division of nature and not-nature). These markers contribute to making racialized white Euro-Canadians appear "as properly and naturally belonging within the spaces of the Canadian nation-state, while marking those racialized differently as 'Other,' either as newcomers whose presence needs explanation or as outsiders who can never belong" (p. 215). Such processes of Othering are at the core of Stanley's theorizing of racisms as essentializing exclusions.

Stanley's (2011) framework for identifying and examining historic and everyday racisms is as follows: "racisms can be meaningfully analyzed and differentiated from other phenomena insofar as they meet three conditions: (1) they involve racialization, (2) these racializations are organized into exclusions, and (3) the resulting racialized exclusions enact significant negative consequences for the racialized and excluded" (p. 7).

As such, while it is important to examine how and why a racism is enacted, the primary point is that racisms are about their effects, affects, and not intentions. This means that racisms can be but are not always malicious acts. In turn, racist exclusions are structures built into the nation-state formation process and now appear normal (Stanley, 2016b), meaning racisms are not just violent actions by active white supremacists (e.g., Nazis, KKK members) and can be perpetuated simply by using and therefore validating societal systems that maintain settler-colonizer dominance and control (Sharma,

2020; Ng-A-Fook et al., 2023). This is a challenging notion for some, because racism is so often framed as an evil perpetrated by bad people (Stanley, 1999). Even if someone does not intend to create exclusion, their lack of intentions does not mean the exclusions do not occur, and the exclusions still have consequences. With these understandings of racialization and racism, and returning to his grade-school story, we can see how Stanley can help public educators recognize the racisms that take place in schools and that so often go overlooked. In taking up and sharing so many questions around racism and antiracism, particularly in relation to contexts of education, Stanley pays forward to his students the epiphany moments that his teacher and educational experiences gave him.

Much like the authors in this volume, Stanley's education shaped his perspectives, and in turn, his educative perspectives have shaped his scholarship. He began his undergraduate degree with the aim of taking mathematics and physics, but, as he jests in his reflection, he knew he was in trouble with these subjects "when the only thing that interested [him] was the philosophical implications of relativity." After taking a course on the history of China and Japan, he felt a pull toward studying Chinese intellectual history, and so, switched to a joint honours degree in Western philosophy and Chinese history. This switch set him on a more personal academic path. After his undergraduate degree, Stanley began his master's degree in Chinese history, for part of which he travelled to China as an exchange student. He explained:

it was only after I came back that I discovered the realities of racism in Canada, when I saw CTV's program *W5* in 1979, a broadcast called *Campus Giveaway*, which was about how foreign students were taking away spaces from Canadians at universities ... every time they showed foreigners, they showed Chinese Canadians. And my reaction was initially to say, you can't talk about my mother like that, who is second generation Chinese Canadian. Then I realized they were talking about me, and I shook for three days and got angry and got involved in the antiracist movement. But the reality is, of course, I had grown up living, breathing, and being surrounded by issues of racism and exclusion.

Stanley's path of antiracism began not just because racism is recognized as *bad* or *wrong* but also because he was triggered by a moment

that revealed to him the banality of racism in his everyday life. As he recalls, he realized in that moment he was a white-passing, half-Chinese person in a white world whose parents had initially decided not to have children because of the racism they experienced, a member of Montreal's anglophone minority who could tell who was French and who was English before they opened their mouths, a non-Jew who had attended a predominantly Jewish high school in a social geography structured by antisemitism, and someone who had come of age watching the Civil Rights movement in the United States and thinking, "thank God there is no racism in Canada." Racism had been invisible to him while being part of the air he breathed. Once racism is seen in this way, it cannot be unseen, but it can be disrupted and dismantled. This led him to become involved in the antiracist movement.

Stanley then took his experiences and knowledges as a historian and educator and applied them in developing his formal work in antiracist education. In the 1980s, while working on his master's degree and then his PhD at the University of British Columbia, he was a founding and executive committee member of the BC Organization to Fight Racism (BCOFR), the founding coordinator of the BCOFR's Antiracism Education and Research Society (now the Canadian Antiracism Education and Research Society), and a coordinator of the "Bridging the Gap Antiracism Community Education Project" with the Surrey-Delta Immigrant Services Society, where he was on the board of directors. From the beginning, his work in antiracism was not merely a denouncement of racism, but also about building connections. As he describes:

when I was involved in the antiracist movement in BC, we were dealing with communities who were experiencing intense racist violence [...] there were times when people would stay awake all night peering through the curtains for fear that they would be the next people that have their houses firebombed. And their neighbours knew nothing about this. This very early on told me that racism isn't just about a set of bad ideas; it's about a set of practices, it's about a structure that shapes people's lives. And to me, that structure was similar to the kinds of social structure you see with, for example, social class or gender, in the sense that it shapes all of us. The idea that we needed to centre the experiences of people who were experiencing racism, that race itself was an artificial construct, and that racism was a form of social

structure, were things early on that I discovered through my anti-racist involvement in community.

Taking on antiracism education was and is not a matter of just doing more social justice work. It requires finding effective ways to make antiracism education active and ongoing to tackle racism in all their complexities and rootedness in our society. For this reason, his starting point of formal antiracist work in the 1980s had to continue.

When we fast-forward to the 2000s, looking at Stanley's work as part of the advisory committee to redesign the Canadian History Hall in the Canadian Museum of History, we see that his antiracist contributions blur the lines between academia and serving the wider public in different capacities as an antiracist historian and teacher education scholar. The Canadian Museum of History represents a public forum for history education. By presenting to the public content that is active, antiracist, and decolonizing, scholars who teach history education provide a lens for critical curation. Dr. Stanley described to us that, as a result of analysis, commentary, and constructive criticism from him (among others), in all the periods of history shown at the Canadian History Hall, "Indigenous people now appear as active people involved in that time period, not just as people who were there initially before Europeans came." Canada, as his scholarship teaches us, is the ongoing (re)creation of a racist nation-state formation. Such national structuring of a country relies on the continued control of Indigenous lands through a system imposed by white settler colonizers (Stanley, 2016a, 2016b).

Part of normalizing control over Indigenous lands through settler colonial systems is done by way of the histories that are (re)told and taught again and again, becoming dominant and dominating, yet remaining banal in relation to our everyday historical consciousness. Such forms of teaching and retelling of settler colonial histories produces grand narratives, which become *official* histories that shape the elementary and high school public schooling history curriculum. This is a process by which "historical narratives must be hegemonic, widely reproduced, and taken for granted" (Stanley, 1998, p. 42). Grand narratives "of nationalism, of European modernity and colonialism," as Stanley describes, "are the narratives *par excellence* that meet these criteria" (p. 42). In turn, one of their main effects is that "they naturalise and hence obscure the assumptions of popular racisms. They are selective in their contents, hegemonic, widely reproduced, and taken for

granted. They foster imagined community and effect racist denial” (p. 42). Teaching such grand narratives in Canada continues to paint colonizing histories in a positive light, often framed as histories that represent all people who are, or would like to become Canadian, and the people who are not represented—mostly people who are not white, male, and English-speaking—become seen as interlopers. “Such narratives effect racialisation by creating,” as Stanley stresses, “categories of people whose histories count and others whose histories do not, those who have a history and those who are alleged not to, those who can tell their own history and those who have what is alleged to be their history told for them” (p. 42). The Canadian History Hall’s shift in the positioning and representation of Indigenous Peoples when conveying historical narratives works to trouble the certainty of Canada and a singular Canadian history by decentering the retellings and teachings of its Eurocentric grand narrative (Stanley, 1998, 2000, 2006). While the displays at the museum exemplify these effects, such material and epistemological contributions are far from the only places where we can see Stanley’s core teachings being conveyed.

Across the historical arc of his published works—journal articles, book chapters, pieces in non-academic publications, and book—he takes up ideas and issues with teaching and using history to trace, understand, and tackle systems and actions of racializations, racism, and exclusions in the present. So much of Stanley’s work shows the importance of people critically examining their existence in different spatial and temporal contexts. His personal drive behind his research shines through, even when he is not directly speaking of himself. He may not always write specifically about himself watching CTV’s *W5*, being an exchange student in China, or leading antiracist community movements in British Columbia, but the influence of those experiences underpins every word he puts on the page; however, his scholarship has always sought to demonstrate that people’s lives are not siloed from the past or from other people, whether they live next door or on the other side of the world.

In one of his early academic publications, Stanley (1999) writes a letter to his children, reflecting on the struggles he faced as he tried to explain the complexities of racism to them when they were young. Indeed, he is writing to both them and us as educators. “Education is,” he writes, “the only solution that I know to these dilemmas. Education, understood not as technique or training, not as schooling, but as part and parcel of [...] the shared act of making meaning of

meanings inherited from others” (p. 41). In another chapter he wrote nearly 25 years later, he states that “we not only need to undo inherited racist practices, but we also need to find and build connections that cross over racist exclusions and in so doing dismantle the systems of power that divide us” (Stanley, 2022, p. 141). Time and time again, people continue to share their stories of racist exclusions, and activists and organizations can shine a light on the systemic barriers that so many Indigenous, Black, and People of Colour face every day. Their stories should be shared, and the barriers should be spotlighted so the racist walls must be torn down. However, Stanley’s point is that merely tearing down the walls will continue to afford opportunities for divisions between people to remain and for such walls to be rebuilt. A more sustainable antiracism must seek to build bridges and bring people together in shared projects that develop new programs and systems and, in turn, new community dynamics. Looking to the past is part of antiracism because it traces and teaches about how systems and structures of division and exclusion came to be in the present. Recognizing the trail of exclusions enables us all to move forward on different and new pathways, avoiding the repetition and (re)creation of settler-colonizer dominance (Stanley, 2011). Over the course of Stanley’s career, his commitment to “doing” history and engaging with the past never wavered. From the beginning of his academic tenure to the moment he passed the proverbial torch, he remained focused on the transformative power of historical inquiry. He used it to inform his antiracist framework to analyze and synthesize how we interact with one another, as fellow human beings, as an everyday praxis of antiracist education. For the entirety of his career, he has provoked colleagues, leaders, policy-makers, and other educational stakeholders with his vast body of academic scholarship such as, but not limited to “Why I Killed Canadian History: Towards an Antiracist History in Canada” (2000), “John A. Macdonald, ‘the Chinese’ and Racist State Formation in Canada” (2016), and “Anti-Chinese Racism and the Structure of White Supremacy: An Anti-Essentialist Antiracist Perspective on Canadian History” (2024), in which he challenges the grand narrative of Canadian history, traces histories of Chinese people and communities in Canada, names racisms and racists, and shows the ways these racisms “invented” different racialized identities. In writings like “Commemorating John A. Macdonald: Collective Remembering and the Structure of Settler Colonialism in British Columbia” (2019/2020) and “Colten Boushie and the Deadly

Articulations of Settler Colonialism: The Origins and Consequences of a Racist Discourse” (2022), he calls our attention to the ongoing anti-Indigenous racisms ingrained in Canadian society and discourse, and highlights the ways that although different forms of racism should be recognized in their own contexts, white supremacy links them together. He emphasizes connected throughlines between past and the present racisms by modelling how present-day racisms can be traced back to the systemic foundations put in place by a settler colonial regime. Stanley (2006) reminds readers that while “the myth that there is no racism in Canada endures [...] as thousands of Canadians are only too well aware, racism is alive and well in Canada” (p. 32). Stanley’s antiracist observations draw our attention to how national myths obscure the deep-rooted structures of racism that his work consistently brings into view.

Over the course of his career, through every class taught, every presentation given, every article and chapter published, and every student guided in research, Stanley engaged and continues to engage acts of racialization, racism, and antiracism, and challenged structures of white supremacy. He developed and shared curricular and pedagogical responses to those structures. He created, indeed provoked, pedagogical opportunities for his audiences—students in university classrooms, colleagues at conferences, the person sitting nearby at lunch—to contemplate the various racialized relationships of privileged inclusions and exclusions in history, education, racisms, antiracisms, and themselves. When we consider the events and discourse of Canada’s past and present with so much racist turmoil still occurring and so many systemic barriers still in place, and we think about the roles that research and education can and do play in disrupting and dismantling racisms, it is no wonder that Stanley’s scholarship continues to affect and shape the current historical and educational research of so many students and scholars. As this collection shows, Stanley’s influence spans across intergenerational communal and individual experiences with specific places, spaces, and times.

When we put a call out for scholars to contribute chapters to this collection, we placed loose parameters on what they could or should write about. There were no predetermined themes or sections for the book. Quite simply, we asked people to share the ways in which Stanley or his written work guided, shaped, and continues to inspire antiracist educational practices to our academic teaching, research, and writing. In response, each author wrote their chapter

either as a story, an academic essay, or an autobiographical account of their relationship to Stanley and his impact on them. Only after we received the submissions did we see the common elements and thus the themes threading through the range of narratives and reflections that we share with readers in the following pages.

The book is organized into three thematic parts, followed by an epilogue in which Timothy graciously offers a thoughtful response to each chapter. While elements of all three themes surface across the contributions, chapters were grouped according to the most prominent thread in each author's reflections and insights. The first part, *Shaping Antiracist Approaches*, comprises five chapters that engage with Stanley's framing of racism and antiracism, showing how his scholarship informed the authors' understandings and commitments to antiracist education. The second part, *"Doing" History Differently*, brings together four chapters that rethink the practice of history and history education, continuing the alternative narrative trajectories Stanley has helped chart. The third and final part, *Mentorship*, shifts focus from theory to relationship, centring four authors' reflections on the lessons—both academic and human—they have learned alongside, with, and from Stanley's guidance and daily antiracist education praxis. Although each chapter stands as an individual account, together they reveal the depth and reach of Stanley's influence: the ways he has shaped our thinking, our pedagogy, and our sense of what it means to be in relation as colleagues, scholars, and antiracist educators.



PART I

## **Shaping Antiracist Approaches**



# Banalities and Multiplicities: Applying Tim Stanley's Work in and Across Places

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Bryan Smith

Historians are divided. Industrious, thrifty and merciless described his business philosophy. Paternalistic but well intentioned has been the judgement on the contract labour issue. Controversy has plagued the name of Robert Towns both during and after his lifetime. Detractors called him "Godfather of the slave trade." His reputation would have been more substantial without the unfounded rumours of "Blackbirding."

[Plaque adjacent to statue of Robert Towns, Townsville,  
Queensland, Australia]

**I**n the central business district of the city I call home—Townsville—stands a rather inconspicuous statue, one memorializing the namesake of the city Robert Towns. The cementing of Towns into the natural landscape is not surprising, significant as he is to the local area. However, as with many settler communities, the writing of the settler city into existence through the name of a colonial figure is not without controversy (Sullivan & Sullivan, 2020). To understand the specific contest, and the diametrically opposed perspectives encoded in the plaque, some historical context is necessary.

During the nineteenth century, the colony of Queensland was home to a network of plantations, an unusual development but one that nonetheless shaped the settlers' relationship with production in the area (Griggs, 2000). Within this context, the racial discourse of the

space helped settlers articulate a particular logic of labour: The oppressive, tropical context of Queensland was linked imaginatively and scientifically to physiological conditions and understandings about and for racialized white bodies (W. Anderson, 2003; Robinson & Wilson, 2008). Combined, these two settler colonial logics gave rise to a belief that the survival of plantations and agriculture broadly required racialized non-white bodies, particularly those from the South Sea Islands, peoples “almost always regarded by their European counterparts as biologically inferior beings, and thus perceived to be highly exploitable as a labour resource, and cheap to employ and sustain” (Hopkins-Weise, 2002, p. 37). With the arrival of the White Australia policies, and the concomitant calls for the expulsion of non-white peoples from the continent, the Queensland Government actively sought to protect the recruitment of labourers from the South Seas on the premise that this freed up white settlers to do the important political and skilled work needed (Megarrity, 2006). Despite this plea, the Commonwealth, shortly after its formation as an invader state, largely expelled racialized non-white South Sea Island labourers in the hopes of cementing white place-making.

I begin with this rather terse history to provide crucial context for the epigraph. During the nineteenth century, the practice of “Blackbirding”—a term that “became parlance to describe the coercion and exploitation associated with slavery and endemic in the way islanders were recruited, especially at the outset”—was a critical part of bringing labourers into the Queensland economic sphere (Cheer & Reeves, 2013, p. 246). For some, Blackbirding was classified as a form of bondage akin to slavery (Mortensen, 2000), a means of skirting the criminalization of slavery across the British Empire. In 2000, the Queensland Government (2000) acknowledged as much, noting that many South Sea Islanders were ultimately treated like slaves. As one might be able to now infer, the man commemorated via the placard and statue in the epigraph was instrumental in this history. Indeed, the first ship chartered to bring back South Sea Islanders labourers was the *Don Juan* by Robert Towns. In defence of the recruitment of labourers, Towns (1864) was quick to defend the practice, noting that his own relationship and those under his employ with the “industrious, tractable, and inoffensive race” of South Sea Islanders was to be respectful (p. 3).

My interest here is less with Towns’s actions specifically (for his complicity in practices of enslavement are under contention) and more on the subtle yet persistent commitment to a vision of public memory

wherein Towns's name is crystalized into the racial and historical geography of the area, therein cementing his place into the material and symbolic history and future of the area. For me, the toponymic effort on the part of the city, and communities like it across Australia, raises a series of questions about race, geography, and history, and their complex entanglements through everyday naming practices. In what follows, I discuss how Tim's work has been particularly helpful as I work through both how to operationalize place-naming as a critical pedagogical tool of antiracism and decolonizing work and further tease out how racial formations use everyday backdrops as a mechanism to normalize white place.

### **I Have a Stalker and Her Name Is Victoria**

In 2018, I was living in Toronto, not all that far from Queen Street, a major east-west thoroughfare through downtown that serves both as a space of the city's cultural cache and as a commemoration of Queen Victoria, the reigning British monarch during Canada's formative nation-state building years (Wise & Gould, 2011). Later that year, I moved to a new place, a few hundred metres closer not just to Queen Street but also Victoria Street, the two streets running parallel in the downtown area. The key difference between each place, however, was that the former was in Toronto and the latter was in Townsville, two cities separated by 15,000 kilometres yet articulated together historically through the British imperial project of conquest and "civilization." In each locale, there is a "deliberately engineered forgetting" of British colonial place-making power, a presumptively innocent yet methodical effort to write two far flung places into the same story of British colonial ambition in such a way that often eludes conscious consideration (Stanley, 2009, p. 144). In each context, city planning, as a colonial *technology of power* (Jackson, 2018) that is shaped by its *colonial culture* (Porter, 2010), comes to make place a medium for narrative transmission, one that extols the virtues of the colonizer all while Indigenous ideas of place are rendered ontologically homeless (Moreton-Robinson, 2003; Watson, 2009). The consequences of this are hardly symbolic. As Brian Casemore (2008) suggests elsewhere, place gives rise to who we are as subjects and my story, despite the vast expanse of the Pacific Ocean, remains necessarily dependent on my relationship to naming practices that persistently connect me to colonial projects of dispossession, theft, and invasion.

Speaking to the role of mapping in the colonial venture, Brian Harley (1992) reminds us that a critical component of drawing new lands was “engulf[ing] them [Indigenous Peoples] with blank space” (p. 531). Once the lands were emptied of spatial understandings in the eyes of the colonizer, cartographers could begin to write their own geographies and through its subsequent representation, make an argument about how space ought to be conceived (Wood, 2010). In settler contexts, this practice of blanking a map serve(d/s) to create the conditions for satisfying the anticipatory geographies that were “based on the perceived possibility of ultimately transforming existing environmental conditions” (Veracini, 2010, p. 182). Such writing help(s/ed) to pacify nervous anxieties about the racial Other while also superimposing metropolitan ideas of logically organized space through the cadastral system (Byrne, 2003). Stanley’s (2009) work reminds us that efforts such as these are hardly incidental but critical acts of racist place-making that represent white settler “occupation of the territory as natural, proper and just, and above all, something to be taken for granted” (p. 144). As a result, the writing of maps and the toponymy used to render it intelligible become a wallpaper of dominance that obscure the imposition of ontologies of place and the patterns of violence, themselves rendered normal through the spatial denials of colonial cartography (Grant & Stanley, 2014). Naming Townsville as such, for example, and drawing a colonial epistemology of space upon said lands writes an argument and narrative in favour of colonial history into the material and symbolic domains of the community, normalized through its simultaneous omnipresence and uninspired presence at every literal street corner.

While I focus here largely on one specific work of Timothy Stanley, I have been profoundly shaped by the call to look at the quintessentially ordinary, particularly as it gives form to and organizes the translation of space into settler place. This work of Tim’s has proven to be a critical part of much work that I do, drawing my attention inwards at the white possessive logics that rationalize dominion over the political and physical terrain of place through its justification as common sense (Moreton-Robinson, 2015). It is easy to interrogate settler invasion as a monolithic enterprise that is understood as an abstract force but what Tim does here is powerfully remind us that colonial control works as a condition of life in place itself, becoming so ordinary that its commemoration and remembrance is “semantically

displaced” in favour of its functional and ostensibly apolitical readings in everyday discourse (Azaryahu, 2009).

### Home Is Where Exclusions Happen

Growing up, I spent most of my time in the “new market” for Toronto, a community whose current name of Newmarket makes no illusions to the city’s place in the history of the area. Newmarket is hardly as new as the name would imply; home to the Wendat, the Haudenosaunee, and the Anishinaabe Peoples (Town of Newmarket, 2019), the lands have long been places through which people have lived, traded, and engaged in the making of goods and livelihoods. Yet, what I identify as my hometown presents itself as an extension of Toronto’s history (the “old market”) and firmly situates itself in the burgeoning state project; in Grade 8, I have vague memories of learning about the community’s early years, not as an area with thousands of years of history but as one sprouting from the intrepid efforts of Quaker pioneers. For years, this became an uncontested and dormant knowledge of my hometown.

The story of Newmarket, as with other white invader places, is a production and consequence of a carefully curated narrative, one that articulates race and space and one that serves to normalize projects of racism (Kobayashi, 2003; Razack, 2002). As Stanley (2011, 2014) has argued across his scholarship, racisms are comprised of three practices: racializations, exclusions, and negative consequences, which arise from said racialized exclusions. Further, he contends that states are critical institutional apparatuses that “play a key role in organizing [these] racisms and in licensing inherited racist practices” (Stanley, 2016a, p. 10). In my work, making sense of the complex webs of toponyms that cohere to create normalized stories of “us,” I’ve come to appreciate how the state’s investment into its self-justification is both written into the spaces it claims dominion over just as it racializes the linguistic terrain of communities, excludes non-conforming languages of place, and does so in such a way that has powerful negative consequences. In this regard, Stanley’s work has proven malleable and constructive to my understanding of how the (re)assertion of invader power, even in moments of Indigenizing or broadening the cultural language of place, is a function of state power to racialize space as a medium to glorify and normalize its own historical presence (see Rose-Redwood, 2016; Tucker & Rose-Redwood, 2015). As he

reminds us, the grand narrative that serves as the historical currency of the state “is widely reproduced and appears to explain the world as it is” (Stanley, 2000, p. 82). What better medium is there for doing this work than the naming practices of communities that literally explain how the world is organized just as it (re)makes it? Newmarket, for example, is not mutually intelligible as anything else, just as the street names that extol the Quaker and settler history become the only intelligible language of place, just as they racialize the town’s cartography and history, exclude the histories of others, and enact negative consequences in denying the place of spatial epistemologies and ontologies that both complement and precede it.

### **Conclusion: Nuance Across Contexts**

Prior to working with Tim, much of my thinking on racism and the political and cultural work that normalized racism as a structuring logic of everyday life was still quite nascent. In discussions with him and through my engagements with his work, I was able to develop a mode of theoretical thinking that has proven critical in my own development as a scholar. In this respect, Tim’s work has proven foundational to the kinds of thinking that I want and need to do now.

In moving to Australia, one of my original concerns was the applicability of my work to a context that sprouted from the same metropolitan centre but diverged through a history specific to that place. In part, that concern was born out of Tim’s argument that an anti-essentialist approach to racism is necessary to avoid reductive and ahistorical readings of racism’s political, cultural, and pedagogical impresses (Stanley, 2014). Working in this context, I was struck by the familiar echoes of British ontological, bodily, and epistemological violence and the respective patterning of white supremacist thinking that bears powerful similarities. Yet, I am always reminded that the application of “Canadian thinking” about colonial and racist formations in Australia might be easy but remains fundamentally context blind. The everyday languages of racism (Hill, 2008) and the historical narratives of white victimization in the face of an oppressive landscape and threats of abhorrent violence are similar in form but distinct in their application to projects of exclusion and their (un)intended consequences (Curthoys, 1999). Australia may appear similar, but its specific efforts and developments of racist state formation have necessitated and resulted in dissimilar and varied racisms and

mechanisms to guard the white state. It is this recognition, drawn from Tim's work on the specificities of the contexts of racisms that speaks through my continued understandings and adaptation to unfamiliar contexts of racialization, exclusions, and their varied consequences.



## A Letter to Maleeka: Approaching Inescapable Racializations and Difficult Memories

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Farah Virani-Murji

When I asked you and your peers to reflect on whether or not you have spoken about your faith identity at school, either with teachers or friends, you shared something with me during our focus group interview that made me pause and wonder. I often think back to the moment when you said, “This one teacher ... [knew about] the Aga Khan ... and I was like, whoa ... he’s the last person I thought would know anything about this!” (Virani-Murji, 2019, p. 88). This disbelief that your teacher could know anything connected to your faith identity sent me back to my childhood. Implicitly, and almost immediately, I think I knew why you were shocked. The idea that someone could understand you, and even *want* to understand, rattled a deeper expectation that you would continue to be a stereotype filled with misunderstandings. For you, this moment of recognition was so unexpected that you could not seem to make sense of it at the time. As you spoke, your sentences were choppy, broken, and filled with confusion. Yet, I also heard a tinge of excitement filled with hopeful possibility. Could someone at your school, a non-Muslim teacher no less, actually know something about your life that is all too often misrepresented?

In “Playing with ‘Nitro,’” Timothy Stanley (2000) reminds us that “in Canada today, people of colour report having to justify their presence in the country in ways that people of European origins do not” (p. 215). This is certainly true for you and the other second-generation

South Asian Muslim youth in my study. This justification often leads to deep inner turmoil and anxiety as you and your peers struggle to find a sense of belonging and worth in your schools and communities. You are indeed “pre-read as [...] not belonging within the imagined community of the nation-state” (Stanley, 2000, p. 215). The struggle is so real for you and your peers. I realized this when another Ismaili Muslim adolescent admitted she sometimes wishes she were white (Virani-Murji, 2019). Stanley’s (2000) discussion of cultural devices encourages me to reflect upon how the spaces in which you, and we all, live silently but also aggressively “mark belonging and exclusion” (p. 215).

I wonder, if you knew about the processes of racialization and the historical complexities of the nationalist mythology of Canada, would the emotional wounds you face perhaps not cut as deeply, or maybe heal more smoothly? Should I have explained to you after the study that “in the logic of racializations, the category to which someone is seen to belong, rather than the category to which they themselves may identify, is what matters” (Stanley, 2000, p. 217). Or perhaps this would lead to the unfortunate realization that “racializations are always inescapable ascriptions” (Stanley, p. 217). You and many others shared with me that you see yourself as Canadian. I asked you to share what comes to your mind when you think of Canada and being Canadian. You and your peers, among other positive traits, said: peace, tolerance, acceptance, kindness, open-mindedness, and freedom. Yet later you also shared how difficult it was to be accepted as Canadian, and that you did not often receive acceptance or open-mindedness in your interactions. You started to notice that your skin colour fits differently in the Canadian landscape; a “landscape [that] marks racialized white Euro-Canadians as properly and naturally belonging within the spaces of the Canadian nation-state, while marking those racialized differently as ‘Other,’ either as newcomers whose presence needs explanation or as outsiders who can never belong” (Stanley, p. 215). Where, then, do racialized people belong?

As I read Stanley’s hesitations and reflections on how to discuss difficult historical (and present) knowledge with his children, I am reminded of my struggle to navigate the territory of inequality and discrimination with you as you and your peers shared your experiences of being excluded, bullied, and not always comfortable with how it felt to be “brown.” I was a researcher in this situation, but to

you, I was also your fellow community member, another person of colour, and trusted authority figure. How should I have engaged my responsibilities to you, to your stories, and to my own research? Because of your race, or your religion, or world view, you tell me you are often shunned, laughed at, and not welcomed in social groups. I was so disappointed and saddened to hear these were your experiences, but in order not to interfere with your story and the research, I tried my best to keep these emotions from you. You did not need to know that your stories of injustice stayed with me long after we spoke, reminding me of experiences from my own childhood, which I had set aside and forgotten, likely because I find them painful memories to relive. Britzman (1998) refers to these memories as a type of difficult knowledge, because they are disquieting to recall and reflect upon, and often force us to face and notice our inner conflicts, anxieties, and wishes.

The inner dialogue that Stanley (1999) shares in his letter pushes me to look again at my role as a researcher. As I think back now, I wonder if my commitment to not interfere was opposed to the very task I had asked you to take on: I was asking to hear your stories of difficulty and pain, but refused to share mine back with you. This silence was not a difficult task. I am used to keeping parts of myself secret, such as my culture or my faith, just as you and many of your peers do every day. Silences, for Stanley (1999), come from many sources. Some, “from the deliberate efforts of your parents and the other adults around you to keep you insulated from certain realities,” and others “from the social structures that shape your lives” (p. 44). Silence is a tricky area. It can feel safe at times when you do not have to hear hurtful comments. At other times, you tell me it can be lonely. So, when you candidly tell me so many experiences of being ignored or not being understood, you realize that it is probably because “almost all of the time, what you learn in school, in books, and on television celebrates only [...] stories [...] of Europeans” (Stanley, p. 45). These “institutional silences” as Stanley so rightly and plainly says, “are the stuff of racisms” (p. 45). These silences, as you often articulate to me, are so difficult to bear. And perhaps that is why you were so shocked when your history teacher told you he knew about the Aga Khan. It has become so natural for you to hide and have many parts of you go unnoticed. A familiar narrative of being unnoticed or acknowledged, although painful, is at least predictable and helps maintain a tolerable reality for you.

I want you to know that like you, I have felt left out, different, and negatively judged in Canada. As I read Stanley's letter to his children, I was inspired to write a letter to you, although belatedly, after we finished our conversations in early 2018. Just as Stanley (1999) felt the urge to keep his children protected from the evils and difficult knowledge of the world, I feel the need to protect you, to smile at you, and to reassure you that you are not alone, even though your stories are layered with feelings of loneliness and isolation. My role as researcher limits me. I am not your parent, I am not your teacher, nor your friend. Instead, I am a researcher looking to create a place for your voice and stories to be represented, read, and heard. Stanley believes, as do I, that education can be an especially hopeful site in that it "has the potential to counter disconnection" (p. 49). For you, and other racialized individuals in Canada, a sense of connection and value is often missing in your life. Education, understood as "the shared act of making meaning of meanings inherited from others," has the potential to build better connections for you and help ease the loneliness you feel too frequently in your life (p. 49).

By the end of the study, I realize that I am no longer the researcher that has quietly heard your stories; rather, I am affected, implicated in your stories, and shaken awake as I come to terms with the truth that my reality is both different from yours and not very different at all. Why speak of our stories if they are so difficult and so haunting? Perhaps in articulating and admitting our difficult memories, we may start to feel heard and closer to being understood. "It seems to me that the only way of challenging such racism is," as Stanley (1999) reminds us, "to ensure that people's actual histories are engaged by troubling the devices of public memory that marks each of us 'as an already-read text'" (p. 225). What, then, does it mean to be read again, as a Muslim youth? How do you wish for someone else to see you? These questions stay with me, and I worry that it has become too easy to give up parts of yourself that are too difficult to explain to others. How can you buy into belonging to a place that also refuses your welcome? You shared with me a risky strategy in this context: It can be easier to split off parts of yourself, so that you keep your religious side for when you are with your family or prayer times, while the rest of the time it is your secular self that takes the stage. Although the choice seems to be made for you, you have also shown me that this strategy is just too isolating. My hope for you is also a hope I carry for myself, and that you have helped me to imagine: In stretching into our lives

as Muslim Canadians, perhaps it is time to welcome the religious and secular sides of ourselves as a way to find connection and spark conversations in education that are a little less lonely.



## Connection Across Space, Time, and Pandemics: A Conversation with Timothy Stanley

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Samantha Cutrara

Since encountering Stanley's work, I have admired how his ideas have been translated and applied to history education. I have appreciated the ways he has pressed for grand narratives to be named, explored, and challenged in our classrooms, and highlighted the ways they connect, and disconnect, us to systematic inequities embedded in our nation (Stanley, 2006). Always a historian, such challenges can draw on Stanley's (2011) histories of education to highlight the ways belonging, identity, and power are made and unmade in the same types of spaces many of us have access to each day, thus acting as a call to do the work of antiracism in our own teaching and learning.

These themes of belonging, racism, and history seem particularly acute in a post-COVID-19 world where statements about being in the "same boat" flew in the face of global and regional inequities, global Black Lives Matter social activism, and historical discussions of the 1918 "Spanish" flu. I questioned how we would think about and teach history after this and if this moment provided opportunities to "imagine a new we" in our history classrooms (Cutrara, 2020). Would witnessing the deconstruction of our social structures due to COVID allow us such curricular and pedagogical opportunities to better intervene in our historical narratives in ways that can work for greater justice? Could this moment foster "new meanings and possible ways of being" in ways that "create conditions that allow for

the telling of these other stories and the exploration of non-nationalist historical frameworks,” like we can with antiracist pedagogy (Stanley, 1998, p. 43)?

It is with these questions in mind that I embarked on a video and podcast series with historians, history educators, archivists, curators, and others about teaching history during and after the COVID-19 Pandemic. Drawing on my theoretical background, of which Stanley’s work is central to, I had 35 conversations from March 2020 to June 2020 about ways to make history education more “meaningful, inclusive, and transformative” for young people today.

Because Stanley’s work is central to my ideas of antiracist Canadian history education, I was thrilled when he agreed to be the final speaker in this series. Filmed on 16 June 2020 and posted 30 June 2020, this conversation was so important for remembering that antiracism cannot solely be centred on activism in this moment, but rather it is a commitment to knowing oneself and others across place and time in ways that can help us be active in shaping this moment.

What follows is an edited transcript of our conversation, followed by a short reflection on how these ideas can help us move forward with our hope for antiracist history education.

**Dr. Samantha Cutrara (SC):** Tim, thank you so much for carving some time to talk with me for the *Pandemic Pedagogy* series. It is particularly wonderful to end this series by talking to you around ideas of antiracist history and antiracist history education.

**Dr. Timothy Stanley (TS):** My pleasure.

**SC:** I have asked everyone the same three questions for the *Pandemic Pedagogy* series, and the first is: Have your ideas about history changed at all during COVID and the Black Lives Matter (BLM) social movement from this same time?

**TS:** Not really, because my ideas around history have been questioning the received processes and forms of historical knowledge. The arrival of COVID proves that, come hell or high water, we are actually part of a globally connected world. And that what happens on the far side of the world can very quickly have an effect on what happens here. Often see these types of effects as a recent product of globalization, but in fact this has always been the case. If we look at the history of previous pandemics, for example, and the Black Death in Europe during the medieval period: People knew it was coming. They had news from distant places and travelled around the world. So that, to

me, confirms that, in fact, we are connected in very material ways to people about whom we know nothing.

The problem with the ways in which we talk and teach about history tends to be histories of nation-states. [By focusing on nation-states] we can pretend that people, when they immigrate to Canada for example, suddenly no longer have ties to the people in the old country. It's as if the history of one nation is magically distinct from another. In fact, there's an awful lot of going back and forth. But instead, [in our history education] we have this fetishization of national history.

COVID-19 and the BLM movement also confirms another issue that I've been thinking about, which is the ways that antiracism education has failed insofar as we see a resurgence of forms of racism that we thought had been long gone. Suddenly, what's euphemistically called "White nationalists," but it's really organized white supremacist, has become respectable in a mainstream way that it was not 20 or 30 years ago.

And so, to me, one of the solutions to this is that we need to teach people, in a very radical way, to understand the complex connections they have to other people in the world, and it starts with understandings of our material linkages and relationships.

It is also about understanding how, in particular spaces, these material linkages get marked by dominant forms of cultural expression that tend to exclude other people. A classic example of this is the fact that we're having this interview in English, even though we are both on territories where Indigenous languages were spoken for millennia longer than this one.

How we mark our territories tends to eliminate the ways in which we're actually materially connected. And then this becomes embodied in the ways in which certain kinds of bodies feel they naturally belong, because they can see themselves reflected back through these markings. Other people, excluded from these marking, can seem to be interlopers.

I think this is the kind of thing that underlies a lot of police violence against the Black people both in Canada and in the United States, and also against Indigenous people in both countries. The assumption that somehow these are people who don't belong in these spaces. That somehow, they're newcomers or outsiders or not legitimately present. This is all part of this material construction of knowledge that surrounds us.

And so, part of the solution here is to teach people to think historically in the sense of understanding how the world they live in, is a historical product, a product of human beings who have come before, and not just the ones that we put up statues to.

**SC:** I'm thinking of a couple things from this answer, and one thing I think of is how quickly certain discourses can manifest during moments like this; like anti-Asian sentiment related to the virus. There are so many parallels to past historical moments that we're seeing now, that it does, like you're saying, indicate a failure of not teaching these connections when we teach history.

**TS:** Yeah, very much so. Despite the valiant efforts that many teachers and other scholars are making, we could think of this as a massive failure of teaching history, because people don't know the pitfalls of the things that they're playing with, which we, as historians, generally have a much better sense of.

**SC:** It's interesting that you're identifying a "failure" of history education, because another reading is that it shows the success of history education to keep dominant narratives as Eurocentric white colonialist narratives, right? Like as much as there are valiant efforts of individual teachers, the structure of history education is such that it could perpetrate and replicate these inaccuracies and these racisms, sexism, and classism on purpose.

I was doing a curriculum review this past summer (Cutrara, 2028 and 2020) and it's amazing how many curricula in Canada are passive. There are objectives that say: "talk about Confederation," but without bringing people into it. As soon as you start talking about events and actions without people, the conversation just becomes about this event or this piece of legislation. You can't talk about challenges of that past action on the present.

Do you have any comments on that? Do you have any comment on my supposition that it's not the failure of history education, but the *success* of history education that leads to continued injustice, and this success is why we need to deconstruct it more?

**TS:** Well, we failed as historians too, to some extent, because we also end up talking about informal forces as actors rather than people as actors.

So I know exactly what you're talking about. This is the idea the railroad was built across Canada and finished in 1885. It's like, "okay, who did it? How? Why?" There's all sorts of stuff that you can discuss but as long as it's passive, there is no actor. It's something that just happened.

There is a marvellous book that came out recently called *The Death of Democracy* (Hett, 2018), which is on the rise of the Nazis in Germany. This book focuses on the idea that in any given moment, what individuals are doing actually has effects. It's something that we don't often see in how histories are told, but human action has effects, and those effects can be good or bad. Part of it is that we never know what the outcome is going to be when we make our choices. I think the more that we can understand the complexities of human action and understanding that those human actions are not just individual things, but they're parts webs of association, the better our understanding will be on the complexities of things, like our current moment. And therefore, the better we'll be able to react to it.

**SC:** One of the reasons why I advocate for thinking about humans and people in history education, is to demonstrate resistance and resilience to students. That we aren't thinking about forces that nobody had a control over, but that there are, and were, always pushes against these forces. And sometimes this pushback was allowed, sometimes it was quiet, but we have to ensure that we know that people have engaged to pushback to show that we, too, can push back and make change in the present.

When you're talking about the webs, one of the themes that I pulled from the early *Pandemic Pedagogy* conversations is how we are witnessing the deconstruction of a system that was never meant for everyone, and how we can see the connectedness of inequities before COVID in the current response and treatment. Many of us talked in this series about bringing an understanding of connected and structural inequities into our history classes in more explicit ways because we are living through this example. Perhaps this is a good way to segue to the second question, which is: Do you think that this current COVID and BLM moment is going to change the way people teach history after this?

**TS:** I hope so, but I'm not actually optimistic. I think the real challenge to improving the quality of history education by improving what's available to the people who teach history. I think instead, if we can use the technologies that we have to, for example, reach out to communities where they are suffering from the virus more directly to find out their stories, can actually bring alive human consequences of inequalities—and that is the stuff that begins to have transformative potential.

When we get people to engage with people who are in vastly different circumstances, you create this notion of solidarity with other

human beings and begin to see that many of those differences are the things that make those other people more interesting than yourself. When people have that sense of connection to others, when the Donald Trumps of the world come along and say “we’re going to build a wall,” our reaction will laugh them out of the room.

I haven’t figured out how you teach people to do this yet, but I’m working on it.

**SC:** One of the things I like to advocate for related to history education is for teachers to lessen control of the narrative. Because when they open up the narrative, there is more space for histories that students want to learn. I have found students are dying to learn history and they do not connect with the histories they’re presented with. I think that lessening control of the narrative and thinking of one’s classroom as a community, exploring and developing solidarities with others, like you’re saying, can provide a pedagogical foundation to a lot of that.

In my book I talk about imagining a new “we,” because I think that the more teachers are thinking of history education as not just telling a story to young people but engaging in a community-building activity, then there can be increasing circles of inclusion in our study of the past, and we can include more about the land, more about the water, and more about a greater spiritual connection amongst people, rather than separating people into us and them. This is a good segue to my last question, which is based on this notion of imagining a new “we.” Do you think that this moment will allow us to imagine a new “we” differently, or in stronger, potentially more active ways, than we could have before?

**TS:** Of course. The danger in the current context is that other forces are going to also reimagine that “we” in much more limited and narrow terms. But I think there’s a sign for hope here, and, believe it or not, it’s the same technologies that are being used to divide us. I’m thinking particularly of social media. So social media algorithms feed back a reflection of ourselves onto ourselves. But this same technology can directly connect you to, like, 4.5 billion people in the world, which has never happened before. And, through things like Google Translate, you can actually talk to them. Suddenly it’s possible to listen to and discover other stories. Other stories about other people across differences, in ways that are direct, immediate, and engaged, and build connection with people. These connections are about inventing or reinventing a different “we.” It is

about moving beyond the taken for granted “we” of the nation and the nation-state.

And we also have to ask ourselves: When we say “we,” who do we mean? Often in history curricula, the “we” that we encounter is the “we” of the imagined community of the nation-state. It’s an exclusive “we” that doesn’t include the whole species. So, the process of building this larger “we,” building an ongoing connection across difference, can help us recognize a shared humanity across time and place. This becomes an ongoing curriculum. It becomes a curriculum for life: to enter into association with people who are different from you and have a mutually agreed upon processes of association. It’s the continual process of entering into association with others that produces growth in intellectual, moral, and other ways. And this is the essence of educational engagement.

**SC:** Right. And it is about getting to know people who are unlike you in order to reimagine spaces where our uniqueness and our differences can challenge who we can become together.

**TS:** And to recognize community. We often talk about communities and imagine this natural place that has no conflict. But communities are also structured by contest and contention. It is about creating communities across differences that don’t alight those differences, but recognize them, accept them, and at times, engage with them.

**SC:** One of the things the pandemic has resulted in is this series, and being able to broaden the conversation about history education because, through these technologies, I’ve spoken to people across Canada and the United States, and also people from England and Australia, and it’s been wonderful to bring those conversations together. To me, these conversations highlight what you’re saying: that we can all develop and challenge ideas even though we’re coming from different places. Thank you so much for ending on that. I think it’s a really powerful way to end. Thank you for talking with me for this series.

**TS:** My pleasure.

In my experience with Stanley’s (2016a, 2016b) work over the last few years, I have seen how he has pivoted to what I call the “transnationality” of experience and histories within Canada (Cutrara, 2018), and was pleased how this was such a central focus of our conversation on this day in June. The COVID-19 global pandemic brought us closer together even while social distancing. Many of us are now using the

digital technologies for communication in ways we had not before. In turn, we have had the opportunity to think about distance and experience in ways that are potentially more robust and critical. Perhaps a lofty ideal, but something we could be thinking about when we teach history—indeed, it is these types of possibilities that I was hoping to explore in this video series.

Along with the focus on connection, Stanley said something in this conversation that has stuck with me in the months since, and that is the “failure” of antiracist education. If antiracist education had been successful in the decades since its inception, he argued, then there would not be the rise of white supremacy that we are seeing in North America today. I take his point but challenged this sense of “failure” with the idea that what we are seeing is the “success” of racist grand narratives often taught in schools.

While antiracist educational initiatives can herald many changes to schooling (although certainly it has not resulted in a perfect and equitable system), I would argue that it is the *strength* of the grand narratives—the very grand narratives that Stanley has written about for decades, the public memory we fail to critically challenge, and the national borders we build higher and higher—that has been the real success that we are seeing in the rise of white supremacy and populist politics. It has not been the failure with the aims and objectives of antiracist education, but rather the *success* of the racist and Eurocentric grand narrative of Canada to remain as the “natural and normal” centre for our understandings of living on this land we call Canada (Stanley, 2006). It has been the success of these narratives that makes the idea of connecting with people across the world or across our town, as Stanley talked about in the interview, such a radical and potentially antiracist act. And thus, it is the success of these narratives that makes Stanley’s work more important than ever. For three decades, Stanley’s work has impelled us to reach across time and space to make connections with people outside national borders, and he has always argued that, when doing so, we can engage in greater forms of justice. How we do this work post-global pandemic is a challenge we all must face.

# Amnesia and Racial Tension: Lessons in the Wake of Racial Reckoning

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Joseph Smith

Over the course of 2020, the world became privy to the mythology that constitutes the promise of North America. For decades the effective marketing strategies employed by North American power brokers, elites, and lay people alike have promulgated the view that North America is a melting pot. However, the ingredients that comprise North America have long since disagreed, and at worst, devolved into bitter conflict.

In my various roles and responsibilities as an educator, researcher, and consultant in both corporate and government spaces, as well as holding a role as an executive director of a non-profit called Generation Chosen, I have been able to witness the multifarious psycho-social and socio-political implications of race, racialization, and racism on the quality of life of all those who call North America home. I have seen those who belong to the dominant culture feign ignorance at the thought that the systems they uphold actively contribute to the systemic discrimination of many. I have seen the listlessness and despondency that attack those racialized as Black like a plague, slowly but surely draining the very energy they have reserved to endure the daily battle of systemic oppression. I have witnessed those who benefit from the status quo disavow the idea that they benefit, and, consequently, erupt with frustration at the thought that their privilege is tied to the disempowerment of whole population groups. And lastly, and most recently, I have seen the actions taken by disenfranchised

and underserved groups misinterpreted; the idea that despair and enervation can masquerade themselves as rancorous and disruptive protest is an idea that rarely dawns on those who subscribe to the nationalist historical narrative of our paradigm.

From the various vantage points and positions with which I have been able to tackle these issues, one thing remains common amongst them all: Our current issues are the result of a mis-relationship between the present and the past. It is this mis-relationship that causes individuals who have suffered through centuries of oppression, due to the transatlantic slave trade, to consistently relive their traumas through the mechanism of adaptive behaviours. It is this mis-relationship that has fostered the amount of white fragility that abounds in the echo chambers of our social media fortresses. As George Santayana famously expressed “those who cannot learn from history are doomed to repeat it,” and nothing could be more accurate than this in light of our current woes. We are fated to repeat that which we do not understand. This brings us to the trailblazing work of Timothy Stanley, an individual whose work exemplifies the painstaking efforts made by some to acquaint individuals with what they often avoid.

In Stanley’s (1998) work “The Struggle for History: Historical Narratives and Anti-Racist Pedagogy,” he makes the very pertinent distinction between “history” understood as a composite of previous human activities and experiences and “histories” understood as the narratives people construct to make meaning of the past (p. 41). In my work I have seen the impressive impact that the latter has had on the former. The facts of previous human activities and experiences have been ineffective in ridding individuals of their convenient narratological constructions. Stanley (1998) purports that historical narratives, be they fictive, or even delusional at times, contribute to popular racism in at least three ways:

First, like all narratives, they are selective. In so far as historical narratives purport to represent the pasts of person, institutions or territories, they help to constitute and justify the relations acted out within popular racism. Through their selections, by articulating certain matters and being silent with respect to others, they establish relations between persons, their pasts and various territories (physical and institutional) [...] Secondly, historical narratives help to constitute “imagined community.” In so far as a narrative presupposes a subject whose story can be told, by

claiming a history as their own, people constitute their own subjectivity, remaking themselves as members of a fictive community [...] Thirdly, unless they are self-consciously aware of how racisms constitute the categories of the narrative, historical narratives effect racist denial. (p. 42)

Historical constructions are actually constructions of history. They represent the narratives we tell ourselves to make personal meanings out of past events that were inherently shared experiences. The trouble is that these constructions often bear no relationship to what has actually happened in the past, its actual impact relative to other comparable phenomena, and its implications for future generations. It is a sign of willful ignorance to deny accountability for a historical construction that benefits some at the expense of others. Indeed, my own doctoral work entitled “The Mind or Narrative and the Narrative of Mind: Philosophy, Religion and Literature” speaks to this as it explores the relationship amongst the stories bequeathed to us about existence, the stories we craft about existence, and our ability/inability to establish worth in self and other because of these narratives. My theoretical work, like Stanley’s, has directly influenced the way I engage with the current status of my vocational responsibilities in light of our societal exposure to anti-Black racism and COVID-19. One of the things I argue is that our inability to recognize the infinite worth of the human being—a worth that transcends the confines of time and space as well as the sociological categories we have developed to order the world, insofar as we have entered into a social contract demanding that we presuppose worth in the other as we too hope to have it presupposed within us—results in our being susceptible to identitarianism or radicalism.

Both identitarianism and radicalism operate on the same spectrum but at different ends: the former revolving around the deification of one’s place within a particular sociological category and the latter a reaction to the former, manifesting as a fundamental disagreement with how one’s societal categorization leads to marginalization. Stanley, in his own terms, recognizes this in his “

Without Guarantees: A Framework for Rethinking Racisms in Schools,” when he states that “racisms organize racializations into exclusions” (Stanley, 2014, p. 11). This statement directly speaks to the history of racial constructions and the plural nature of racism(s). Certain scientists, in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, were

contracted by political elites—and supported by the clergy—to develop a taxonomy of the human species. Initially benign and then later insidious, these racial categorizations developed by individuals like German physiologist Johann Friedrich Blumenbach in 1793 and Christian European teacher Frederic Farrar in 1866, represent attempts to convoke the masses around convenient constructions of reality that would warrant that some populations be dispossessed of the resources they were most proximate to and did not deserve. Once these racial classificatory systems were promulgated to the laymen across Europe, they were then corroborated by racist theories about the supremacy of the Indo-European dating back to ancient Greece. These constructions conveniently reimagine history so that history becomes a tool to confirm preconfigured biases.

In my professional work I have been amazed in my dealings with individuals on both ends of the spectrum who seem to be unaware that their relations to others and territories, and their participation within a particular community, are the result of neatly crafted myths reverberating across time and as such posing as “truths” about external reality. It comes as a surprise to most when I highlight that “whiteness” as a racial category, originally defined as referring to White Anglo-Saxon Protestants, expanded and contracted throughout the twentieth century to include and exclude people based upon political imperatives and economic incentives. As a category, whiteness itself is hollow. It is a repository for whatever timely advantage can be acquired by the calculated exclusion/inclusion of select peoples. Conversely, “Blackness” with the root racial identifier being Black, itself is a term developed for particular reasons to which many folks are not aware.

When I worked as a project coordinator for the groundbreaking study The Black Experience project, which looked at and attempted to measure the quality of life of individuals who identify as Black within the GTA (Greater Toronto Area), one result in particular was quite fascinating. We asked respondents what they call themselves and how they would like to be referred to in terms of their ethno-cultural and racial identities. More than three quarters of the fifteen hundred respondents stated that they would like to be referred to as Black. Less than a quarter of respondents did not accept the nomenclature as an accurate representation of who and what they were. When probed, respondents expressed that there were negative connotations with the identifier “Black,” connotations that they did not want attached to themselves. They preferred to identify in accordance with their

socio-political and national origins. They chose to be referred to as Somalian, Nigerian, Congolese, and Jamaican, for example instead of Black. While the choice to self-determine is an integral component of what it means to be a democratic citizen, when those choices are made without adequate and accurate information, the choices become less free. The choices become reactions to the apparent gravitas and weight of putative norms and understandings.

The appellation “Black” was first utilized to a large extent during the civil rights movements of the 1950s and 1960s. It was seen as an appellation uniting all those who were a part of the African diaspora, and, consequently, united in the fight against the ways systemic anti-Black racism manifested itself within the middle of the twentieth century. It also represented a refusal to be referred to as “coloured”: a term abhorred by Black folk all over due to its inherently racist connotations. Insofar as some of this history has been lost on some folks who choose not to identify as Black, the historical narrative that has developed has filled in the gaps of this lost understanding. That historical narrative is rooted in the societal ramifications of Blaxploitation films in the 1970s and the growing rate of impoverishment befalling Black communities across North America due to economic racism and red-lining. It makes sense that an individual would want to distance themselves from this history by subscribing to an alternative understanding of what belonging to the African diaspora means. However, it represents a clear example of the “imagined community” and the “imagining” of communities that historical narratives establish for individuals to their detriment or benefit.

The imagined community of whiteness equally positions individuals in an ambiguous and ambivalent space that renders them inauthentic in their engagement with external reality. The historical narrative of Canada being bereft of the types of racisms that beset and beleaguer America is as pernicious and erroneous as the historical narrative that the New World was in fact “new” and needed to be “discovered.” Canadians of all colours, creeds, and cultures often believe in light of these narratives that Canada possessed no such thing as slavery or segregation. The truth is that 1834 was the year in which Canada abolished slavery and the last segregated school closed its doors in Nova Scotia in 1984. It puzzles individuals I have been granted the opportunity to work with that such a history existed like this in Canada. The surprise of a few hides behind it the systemic and structural neglect of many. The surprise is predicated upon

the particular ways in which dominant groups perceive the series of events that have contributed to their privileged position. Stanley understands this to be the “gaze” of the nationalist understanding of reality. What is symptomatic of this gaze is the belief that we live in a post-racial world, where the categories of old no longer burden those who were once severely oppressed. Conversely, what is equally symptomatic of this gaze is the belief that change pertaining to diversity, equity, and inclusion is “rapid” rather than simply pertinent. To this latter point, Stanley (1998) states that “this gaze is evident in the claim that the pace of change today is unprecedented. The validity of this claim entirely depends upon one’s location with respect to the nationalist gaze. For those at the centre of the imagined community, it may be unprecedented; for others it is not.” (Stanley, 1998, p. 49).

The imagined community is rooted in an imagined history, which is why presentations made to individuals within this group, that speak to the ways in which their imagined histories pervert the true narrative of the past, typically incites dissent and a weaponized defensiveness.

The idea that Canada is a *racist state* is one such idea that startles and ruffles the feathers of those who claim to belong to the imagined community (Stanley, 2017a, p. 9). Insofar as they see the term “racist” as a pejorative term and not a descriptor, they immediately subsume all the negative connotations involving racism into themselves seemingly against their will. This is what aggravates those whose mythology of Canada, or any colonial nation-state, is one that sanitizes the past to reproduce it in new ways. Stanley (2017a) purports that “Racist state formation was not new in Canada in 1885, but its pre-1885 forms often differed from its post-1885 forms. Indeed, the racialized exclusion of indigenous and Black people had been organized already into the state system: in the former case through formal regulation, in the latter case through customary practices” (p. 12).

Racist state formation is one avenue by which discrimination is baked into the structure of our socio-political milieu. It is the cultural practices, beliefs, and historical narratives held by those in power that either reify *race* and make it a concrete thing to be dealt with through the mechanism of exclusion, or transcend *race* by developing principles upon which members of the polis can acquire recourse to deal with retrograde cultural assumptions that oppose diversity.

We can see here that the democratic experiment of the last two hundred years, while comprised of the component parts of racist state

formation equally possesses notions that counteract the ease with which initial formations are allowed to exist (that is, the Constitution or the Charter of Rights and Freedoms). Both things can be true simultaneously. However, one thing unallowed for the nationalist historical narrative—the imagined community—are the multiple, even contradictory, identities that shape people’s lives or the life of the polis (Stanley, 1998). The polis can at once be racist and oriented towards equity. If this were not the case, we would have no recourse with which to challenge, uproot, and remake our system given that it would be impervious to such change. But, the dual nature of our history, that fact that it is at once real and imagined, offers us the ability to acknowledge with strength and understanding that although John A. McDonald was a white supremacist our Confederation does not have to be.

Indeed, if it were not for the statement that “All Men Are Created Equal” from the United States, Declaration of Independence, the famous abolitionist David Walker would have had no opportunity to argue that slavery was unconstitutional. It is this dual nature of our lived experiences within the plural world of North America that we must recognize as an advantage rather than, as nationalist storytellers see it, a stain. The imagined communities of those with power and privilege attempt to remain immovable and impenetrable in our current climate. However, they are not strong enough to contend with the weight of a truth once hidden to some and now exposed to all. That is, if we have learned anything from the murder of George Floyd, it should be that imagining a state of affairs where exclusion is not the norm is just as possible and just as easy as some find it to imagine that exclusion is the norm.



## “Something to Think About”: Antiracisms and Learning to Kill Canadian History

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Mark T. S. Currie

Timothy J. Stanley was my PhD supervisor. This was not the case when I first started the program. Only after I finished my coursework did we agree to work together. Even without the student-supervisor relationship made official, I connected to him and his work early on in my degree. During the first year of my PhD experience, I was in the early stages of sorting out what exactly my research would be while I was with the Faculty of Education. I had a few ideas that I was toying with, but all I knew for certain was that I wanted to do work in antiracism. Through coursework, I began to engage with and use several publications on racism and antiracism written by Stanley (2006, 2009, 2012a, 2016b). In turn, his work pushed my thinking in relation to the different strategic antiracism underpinnings and approaches to teaching (Stanley, 1998, 2014). My ability to challenge grand colonizing narratives grew in relation to studying Stanley’s scholarship. Indeed, it taught me to recognize the ways racism becomes banal through everyday spaces (Stanley, 2006, 2009, 2012a, 2016b). I cited his scholarship increasingly for my course papers and found support for my developing arguments. Although still new to the field of racism and antiracism, I was able to grow my confidence in using Stanley’s work to strategically situate my philosophical and pedagogical dispositions. Near the end of my first year in the program, I presented at the University of Ottawa Faculty of Education graduate student conference. I shared a paper I wrote the previous (2016) fall semester for

the Historical Narratives and Education course. When I sat at the front of the room to begin the conference session, Stanley was sitting in the audience. Members of our panel presentation were taking Stanley's Racism and Anti-Racism in Education course. We later found out that he attended the session to show support for students doing antiracism education research.

Throughout my studies and current research and teaching around racism and antiracism, one lesson core to my work is that developing antiracism starts with the self. I am the son of a racialized-white, Canadian-born father and a racialized-Coloured, South African-born mother.<sup>1</sup> I grew up seeing my father's identity in all the textbooks while simultaneously seeking and sometimes attempting to interject histories of South Africa and Apartheid into the historical narratives of what is called Canada that I was taught in school. For me, the problem was not that my father's histories, in various ways, were represented within the school curriculum. Rather, my issue was that part of our family history, my mother's, did not fit and connect with the grand narrative histories presented to me (Stanley, 2006).

Like many of my colleagues in this collection, after reading much of Stanley's work, but particularly his article (2000) "Why I Killed Canadian History: Towards an Anti-Racist History in Canada," I found a lens and a path for pursuing research in antiracism through history education. I gained a clearer and more nuanced sense of how to articulate what I had been feeling and pondering for years. Perhaps fitting into a history constructed with intentions to instill "nationalist pride so as to preserve political unity" was not necessary because that particular history was problematic and, as I view it, racist (Stanley, 2000, p. 86). I was seeking "an antiracist history [that] has the potential to be more successful in capturing the multiple pasts of this time and place than nationalist frameworks have proven to be" (Stanley, 2000, p. 102). I wanted to join Stanley in killing certain grand narratives of Canadian history. Taking up this work requires engaging with the complex world, examining the ways our socio-historical spaces work, and mobilizing knowledge. Presenting my paper at the

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1. The term "Coloured" in the North American context is an outdated and now-racist label for people who are racialized as Black; however, in South Africa, "Coloured" as a racialization is problematic to some because of its affirmation of the former Apartheid government's categories of "race," but is also one with which many people positively identify in the same way people identify as Black, Asian, etc.

graduate student conference marked my first public attempt to take these steps.

After I was introduced by the session chair, I was a bit nervous. The audience itself did not bother me. I am fine with being in front of groups. I feared being told by anyone, especially by Stanley himself, that I did not know what I was talking about or that I was misrepresenting his work and antiracism in general—the usual graduate student imposter syndrome stuff. About a third of the way into my presentation, as I scanned the audience to connect and engage with my listeners, I looked to the back row where Stanley was sitting. His eyes were closed, and, from my perspective, he appeared to be taking a nap. I felt a sense of relief. The possibility that I had bored him to sleep was not concerning in the moment. My self-conscious thought was that if he was asleep, he would not know which points of my presentation were worthy of shredding to pieces, by which I mean critically but professionally highlighting the shortcomings of my argument. I finished my presentation with relative ease, fielded a few questions, and then the session was over. After gathering my things, as I walked past Stanley on my way to the door, still sitting in his seat, he looked up and started with “something to think about.” I now know these words indicate the oncoming of a (sometimes long) thoughtful and critical discussion. This simple phrase encompasses the key elements of Stanley’s work that I carry with me through every stage of my scholarly development. It acts as a reminder that lines of thinking, particularly in antiracism, can always be considered in other ways with added complexities. What follows next is a discussion of two of those key elements—anti-essentialist antiracism and antiracism without guarantees—and how they influence my ongoing contributions to killing Canadian history.

### **(Anti-)Essentialisms**

To examine the anti-essentialist antiracism first requires a general understanding of discussions around essentialisms. Ho et al. (2015) state that essentialisms are perpetuated by the belief that “members of a group share hidden, inborn, and inalterable ‘essences’ that grant them categorical identity and that those identities exist within sharp (i.e. discrete) boundaries” (p. 1639). Fuss (1989) examines and problematizes the debates between essentialists, those who believe there to be a core essence to entities, and constructivists, those who believe

that all meaning attributed to any given entity is constructed through social exchange. In relation to the socially constructed concept of “race,” essentialist views suggest that there are foundational, inherent traits that people of common racializations share. For example, Joyce (1987a, 1987b) suggests that there is a shared essence amongst racialized Black people that determines a Black perspective underpinning Black lived experience. Moreover, for Joyce, to deny this is to remove positive identity and solidarity between those oppressed by racism. Such essentializations of identity then are core to who that person is and always has been from birth. Indeed, someone might carry a racialized identity with them their entire life, and that sense of self is not something anti-essentialists aim to erase. The problem is that not all people who share the same racialized identity think the same, speak the same, or behave in the same ways. The similarities between the people come from context and relational experience, not any inherent traits linked to how they look. The name given to that identity (e.g., Black or Asian) has a history of its creation and re-creation.

No natural meaning stems from the amount of melanin in a person’s skin cells or the shape of their eyes or the texture of their hair. Socially constructed meanings, whether positive or negative, are created and re-created, and the spaces in which those meanings are embraced or marginalized are constructed as well. Ibrahim (2014) posits racialized Black people are always in processes of *becoming* Black here in Canada. He contends that factors that give meaning to what is Black are ever-changing. And yet, the label of “Black” remains the same. Blackness, then, is always being re-made, and never final. While Ibrahim focuses on Blackness, his point could be applied to any racialization, as “race” is always in flux, always floating (Hall in Hughes et al., 1997). The anti-essentialist position seeks to problematize notions of essentializing socially constructed meanings as natural boundaries that place people in categories and structured societies where racisms become banal (Goldberg, 2002; Montgomery, 2005). As Munro Hendry (2011) points out, the dilemma is in telling counter-hegemonic histories while using the essentialized labels. Fuss (1989) highlights that anti-essentialism is thought by some to be unhelpful because it is seen as pluralistic, not acknowledging contexts and dynamics. Such arguments oversimplify the complexities within the language exchanges that create knowledge and does not examine how the contexts and dynamics are also constructed. This is not to show support for pro-pluralism stances, because racism does

not simply work on a one-to-one basis. Instead, racisms are much more dependent upon the intertwined relations between sociohistorical people and systems.

An anti-essentialist perspective in relation to "race" and racism suggests that historical and present contexts must be considered, not just because spatial and temporal traits change, but because meanings are never fixed and are constantly being (re)created and (re)asserted. Here Razack (1998) argues, "The point of anti-essentialism—the complex tracing of the social narratives that script how women [and people of colour] experience their gender ['race' and racism] and how others respond to it—is to determine how to identify and interrupt those assumptions and practices that deny women [and people of colour] their human rights". She adds that, in short, "the point of anti-essentialism is antisubordination" (p. 158).

Focusing on social narratives, Stanley (2014) contends that an anti-essentialist "is deeply engaged with analyzing social formations and their consequences so as to understand and harness the forces that make change without presuming that this will produce an end to history" (p. 5). Anti-essentialist antiracist education is then about disrupting exclusions while also avoiding essentialisms. For Stanley (2016b), it is critically rereading and rewriting histories in relation to their particular contexts and in turn not projecting present-day meanings upon the past.

To understand how racisms become (re)created in different times and places, the contexts, which include people, must be understood as producers and products of histories. Within the process of production, racialized privileges take shape. Identifying those who are privileged and those who are not is complex and can change with context. In response, post-colonial theorist Gayatri Spivak (1988) reminds us of the merits when using "strategic essentialism." Using as her example the act of telling a history, she contends that strategically defining or essentializing a subject "is not to describe 'the way things really were' or to privilege the narrative of history [...] as the best version of history. It is, rather, to offer an account of how an explanation and narrative of reality was established as the normative one" (p. 76). The person telling the history and the people within the history being shared become positioned in relation to the narrative, and, in that context, become essentialized by their positioning. This use of essentialism is not an admission of "hidden essentialisms," and should not be seen as working against anti-essentialism. Strategic essentialisms are not

about subscribing to essentialist views (Fuss, 1989, p. 13). They work critically with the creation of perceived essentialisms, acknowledging that people sometimes operate *as if* essences of groups and knowledge exist. In this sense, for the sake of deconstruction, it becomes helpful to group people based on how they *operate* in context, but not on some category of who they *are*. The anti-essentialist antiracist aim, then, is to highlight the contradictions in the logics (a term I use loosely) of racist people and structures as they racialize people and then use their own created meanings of said racializations to justify exclusions of the racialized people.

Exclusions often manifest through essentialized positions of nationalism and citizenship identities, such as notions of Canada being a country of white and European origins. These exclusions are not always done maliciously. They often stem from, as Stanley (2006) stresses, the perceptions of Canada that are taught through teaching a grand national narrative within Canadian history classrooms and public pedagogies (e.g., plaques, monuments). The lesson learned is that French and English explorers (not colonizers) “founded” Canada, and anyone else, particularly anyone of colour, joined the already-established nation later. Shifts away from this exclusionary narrative can be seen, for example, with 13 southern Ontario high schools making an Indigenous Voices course a mandatory Grade 11 English credit (Francis, 2019). This positive shift, however, does not yet represent the wider Canadian society. One need only look to the experience of New Democratic Party leader Jagmeet Singh when campaigning for the 2019 Canadian federal election.

As a Sikh man who wore a turban on the campaign trail, Singh was greeting people in Montreal before taking to the podium for a rally, a racialized white man shook hands with Singh and then leaned in to tell him that he (Singh) should remove his turban to look more Canadian. Upon Singh’s initial rejection of this idea, the man cited the old saying, “When in Rome, do as the Romans do,” with the obvious implication that Canadians do not wear turbans. After Singh’s full response, one which expressed his disagreement and suggested that Sikh people can be Canadian people, the man then wished Singh luck and hoped for Singh’s victory in the election. The man seemed to genuinely think he was offering Singh good advice, rather than enacting racism by essentializing both Canadian and Sikh people. This example brings to light what Stanley (1999) says is the problem with placing racism in a basic “good” versus “bad” binary. As Stanley

often reminded me during our meetings and with teacher candidates during his Schooling and Society course, "good people can do racist things and bad people can do antiracist things; racist people can do antiracist things and antiracist people can do racist things" (personal communication, 15 May 2018). This complexity to the ways racisms and antiracisms can be enacted means that when creating antiracisms, there are no guarantees.

### **Antiracism Without Guarantees**

The lack of guarantees is what underpins the ways racisms and antiracisms can and should be thought about for how they do and do not work. In true anti-essentialist fashion, the argument is that no two settings are the same. As Stanley (2011) states, we must understand racisms in the plural. With this being the case, there can be no one-size-fits-all antiracism. The way Stanley takes up this idea of antiracism without guarantees is not to say antiracism cannot be guaranteed and should therefore be abandoned, but rather his discussion suggests that antiracism is never finished. People and the world at large must be recognized as ever-changing, in need of antiracists willing to try and, when needed, adapt as racism shifts in and out of spaces, growing thicker and thinner as conditions allow, like a fog. The goal, then, is to change the conditions to clear out the fog and, wherever possible, fill the spaces with antiracism before racism has a chance to seep in. The work of antiracism, as Stanley teaches, is to seek to make racism uninhabitable.

The sense of racism as something that is inhabited opens avenues of thinking about racism and antiracism as being connected to space. For Stanley (2016b), racism(s) have shaped the modern nation-state. In turn, the formation of Canada stems from a variety of racisms, beginning with the colonization of Indigenous lands and following up with government policies dictating exclusions such as when and how Indigenous and racialized Chinese people could vote and live in Canada (Stanley, 2016b). One main point here is that racism and antiracism contribute to the (re)creation and shaping of meanings attached to the material world. In doing so, varying spaces become marked with different racialized inclusions and exclusions (Currie, 2021). These markings of exclusion do not only include the plaques and monuments dedicated to dead, white, male military leaders, though they do make for easy targets when seeking examples of how

racism continues to be celebrated. The markers also include the mostly English and French names of the streets we walk and drive, or the European languages known to be “official” on unceded Indigenous territories, or even schools that become known for being a “mostly Black school,” “predominantly Asian school,” or “very diverse school.” Growing up in a small farming town in Southern Ontario and attending a “mostly white” school, I heard the racist words quietly uttered about the one racialized Black family. I noticed when a new student was immediately referred to as “the new Asian girl.” And I felt the exclusion when I was told I could not focus my family heritage project on South Africa because there would not be other students to be part of the group work. The message was that I should find some white, European roots to investigate so I could “fit in” with a group. These labels and exclusions are all products and producers of histories of racism, perpetuating white as the norm and other racializations as joining the Canadian grand national narrative after the fact, if they are included at all. This false sense of “we were here first” authority creates boundaries that enact nationalism, reifying a “we” that is constructed and that portrays the us/them binary as natural.

There is nothing natural or inherent about the borders we live within, the everyday spaces we occupy, or even the identities we embrace and ascribe. However, as Stanley shows us, they all become socially real and have real effects, shaping with whom and how we interact, and in which spaces each of us can claim a place. Those markings that structure our everyday spaces—the names of streets and bus stops, the buildings we work and live in—become banal (Smith, 2017). Histories of exclusion then become ignored, forgotten, and silenced while continuing to have negative effects upon marginalized and racialized bodies (Puwar, 2004). What is often overlooked and is something Stanley emphasizes is how these racialized exclusions came to be. The answer is *people* did it and still do it. Much discussion is had about systemic barriers, and as well they should be addressed, but they need to be understood in a full scope to recognize that, yes, many societal systems are racist and discriminatory, but these systems were and are created by people. The streets did not name themselves. The school curriculum did not write itself. The buildings did not spring up from the earth like a tree. Even the placement of many actual trees resulted because of decisions made by people (Baldwin et al., 2011). If people create these systems and structures with racism entrenched in them, people can un-create and re-create systems, structures, and

spaces that are antiracist and more generally non-exclusionary. It will happen over and over, because there are no guarantees, and the world and people will change, and our present will be re-created as narratives to become the future's history upon which people will reflect and learn and (re)create again.

### **Doing the (Never-Finished)**

So, why do I want to follow Timothy J. Stanley in killing Canadian history? I do so because the history and space of what is called Canada is more complex and dynamic than the borders constructed by French and English colonizers. I do so because the grand national narrative establishes a binary of in and out, us and them, thereby excluding racialized histories and experience and portraying the path of colonial progress as inevitable (Stanley, 2006). Like Stanley, I seek to disrupt these narratives not simply to rage against the racist settler colonial machine but also to acknowledge and show respect for the histories and knowledges of those who have been and continue to be silenced. And I do this not just because it seems like a nice thing to do but because we are all part of this world, and we live in relation to each other (Donald, 2009). Here Stanley (2000) reminds us, "ultimately there is no way of knowing whether an historical interpretation corresponds to the real past itself, because the real past is not knowable except through interpretation" (p. 82). Engaging varying histories, not just the grand national narrative, helps us to understand different interpretations of the past that shape how we create ourselves and the places we hold within the spaces we build and occupy. Creating divisions by imposing meanings of dominance and oppression upon differences jeopardizes our abilities to recognize and embrace our relations. Through Stanley's work in antiracism, there is hope for understanding ourselves and each other as complex beings existing in a complex but interconnected world where we can accept and embrace differences and break down divisions. If antiracism is never finished, then there must be more who carry forward and add to the work that Stanley has developed, to keep the fog of racism from seeping in. These are just some things Tim taught me to think about.



PART II

## **“Doing” History Differently**



## Challenging the Old Guard and Disrupting the Grand Narrative

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Shannon Conway

I initially became acquainted with Timothy Stanley's work during the first semester of my master's program when I took a graduate seminar on Canadian historiography. The seminar was constructed around the concept of the various history wars in Canadian historical writing. One such war was the so-called killing of Canadian history, as proclaimed by J. L. Granatstein in his polemic *Who Killed Canadian History?* (1998). This disciplinary war occurred at the turn of the twenty-first century, primarily between 1998 and 2000, when Granatstein was subsequently rebutted by the social and cultural historians he was criticizing, such as A. B. McKillop (1999), Bryan Palmer (1999), and Timothy Stanley (2000).

Compared to my fellow potential historians-to-be, I was a bit late to the Canadian history party. Unlike my classmates, I had disregarded Canadian history during my undergraduate history degree. I believed it to be dreadfully boring. Instead, I favoured the more exciting stuff of Revolutionary and Soviet-era Russian history. Despite my initial lack of interest in Canadian history, I pursued a Canadian historical topic for my master's program, primarily due to the heavy Canadian influence in my political science studies. As such, I had to swiftly familiarize myself with Canadian historiography, which was replete with historical narratives put forth by an old guard of historians. Their collective historical narratives of Canada were, to say the least, unsatisfying and insufficient. Yet, upon becoming familiar with

the embittered wars in Canadian historical writing, I quickly came to see how wrong I had been about Canadian history—if only for the past and ongoing historiographical squabbles. I subsequently began to see a place for myself in these conversations that were (or had yet to take place) within the field of Canadian history and its respective literature, fraught with ongoing interpretive battles.

During my first serious study of Canadian historiography, I was immediately fascinated with the notion of Canadian history being “dead” and that Canadian historians were the perpetrators. In “Why I Killed Canadian History,” Stanley (2000) admits to killing the field in which he worked. This was a concept I had not yet considered, but one that ultimately proved to be rather effective. I had been struggling with where to place myself within a field that I saw to be filled with misconceptions and consequently misaligned historical narratives. I was well acquainted with the moving away from the traditional history of “great men” with the turn of social history beginning in the 1960s. However, this familiarization was not enough to alleviate my conflict of desire to work on Canadian national identity but having contempt for the national history itself. It was difficult enough that I wanted to focus on something that was *passé* in Canadian historical writing (constructions of Canadian identity). I also felt at fault that through such work I could ultimately be contributing to a nationalist history that I took issue with. However, through Stanley’s resoluteness in killing Canadian history, I saw that I could work on topics that fell within that nationalist historical writing that I believed to be misconstrued and in turn attempt to challenge that problematic narrative.

Through Stanley’s work, among others such as Ian McKay and Phillip Buckner, I saw that through recasting grand narratives, altered, new, and divergent narratives could be (re)produced, (re)told, and (re)imagined. I was determined to be a part of that effort. During my master’s degree I kept Stanley’s position (and article) on killing Canadian history in my back pocket, to argue against the old guard of Canadian historians and their earlier interpretations and perceptions of Canadian history and historical writing. I did not know then that I was *en route* to creating variations on the Canadian historical narrative and in doing so directly challenging grand narratives in the ways I had envisioned (and ways I had not even conceived of back then).

Consequently, Stanley’s work has influenced my evolution as a Canadian historian in several ways. Most central among them is his critical take on the reproduction of grand narratives. Notably, he presents

a critique of the predominantly nationalist framework of Canadian historical writing in his "Why I Killed Canadian History" (2000) and "Whose Public? Whose Memory? Racisms, Grand Narratives and Canadian History" (2006). In both pieces, Stanley outlines his perceptions of the problems and limitations of the notion of a grand narrative in general, and in particular Canadian historical writing.

Referring to the "alleged death of Canadian history," Granatstein (1998) argued that national history is meant to preserve national unity by fostering national pride through a "shared account of the past" (Stanley, 2000, pp. 86–87). Old guard historians, like G. M. Wrong, Adam Shortt, Harold Innis, Donald Creighton, and J. M. S. Careless, produced historical narratives that built and contributed to such a singular, shared account of the past (Berger, 1986). However, Stanley (2000) reminds us that not all Canadians have a "shared past" that can be recounted in this way (p. 88). A central purpose of a grand narrative is linked to the creation of a shared public memory, which in turn makes the "imagined community," the very settler colonial nation itself. Consequently, this plays a significant role in the understanding of what it is to be "Canadian" and who counts as "Canadians" (Stanley, 2006).

There are of course variations of the grand narratives that constitute English-Canadian history. However, they share particular aspects, such as European arrival, disregard for non-Europeans, and a focus on European settlement, nation building, and "great men." As Stanley (2006) states, this then "imposes an organization on the past that starts with the present and works backwards" (p. 34). This Whiggish interpretation makes the narrative of European dominance, and the causal chain of events appear as inevitable, and is in essence ahistorical. As the grand narrative in Canadian history is told from a British Anglo-Protestant-Canadian point of view, it reproduces a singular interpretation. Stanley justly posits that the grand narrative is "premised on a series of exclusions" and marginalizations (Stanley, 2006, p. 34), thereby leaving a significant percentage of Canadian citizens, as well as First Nations, Inuit, and Métis nations out of this supposed "shared account of the past" (Stanley, 2000, p. 87). In this way, Stanley (2006) observes that the grand narrative "is more about the nation as a kind of naturally occurring and unquestioned category than it is about the actual state called 'Canada'" (p. 36).

With Canadians not having a singular shared past, the very basis of the grand narrative is fundamentally misaligned and cannot create

the national unity that was intended. This is one of the key shortcomings with Canadian historical writing, though there are other notable limitations. Stanley (2000) has highlighted the failure to incorporate accounts of Canadian historical narratives in languages other than English and French (though the two have markedly different historical narratives). In addition to the linguistic, there are many divisions between Canadians preventing a seemingly necessary shared past that enables the national unity sought by Granatsteinians, such as race, culture, region, and class.

By not fitting into the shared account of the past and thereby the grand narrative, these Canadians are then excluded from the historical narrative of their country. With the exclusion of people from the narrative and thus public memory, Stanley (2006) reminds us that “Canadianness” is understood in such a way that it is incapable of reflecting the reality of Canada both historically and present day (p. 37). The mere adding-on of marginalized “others” to the grand narrative, such as a supplementary chapter in a history textbook, can have the effect of “symbolic ghettoization” within the historical narrative and thus public memory ultimately affecting present-day understandings and associations (p. 40). As such, Stanley’s demand to replace “the monolith of grand narrative with a web of multiple overlapping histories” could help to rectify some of the problems associated with Canadian historical narratives by better reflecting the historical and present-day society it is attempting to both recount and address (p. 47).

Stanley (2000) calls on us to reflect on our inability to know the “real” past itself. Instead, we can only know the past through our interpretations in the present. Historians work to uncover and develop understandings of the past, ultimately forming national historical narratives. These narratives are then either embraced or ignored by the wider society, as knowing the true past is perhaps an exercise in futility but understanding an interpretation of the past is entirely plausible. The notion of not being able to know the past itself places significant importance on historical interpretations—who are creating them, why they are creating them, and how they are creating them. With this understanding, my critique of the grand narrative grew evermore fixed. No longer could I live with the grand narrative of Canadian as it has existed for generations without being part of those who were fighting against it.

In questioning the “project” of Canada and its historical narrative formulations in my work, I took notice of Stanley’s (2000)

questions of “how some identities come to be seen as fixed” and how some identities “become normalized and others marginalized” (p. 79). As mentioned, the creation and teaching of grand narratives aid in deciding who counts and does not count as being “Canadian.” The central problem with this is the narrative plot is predicated on a singular interpretation of the past, thereby creating a singular idea of what it is to be Canadian and who Canadians are—both in the past and present-day.

Where identities are indeed fluid, a national identity such as Canada’s being fixed (let alone being fixed in a singular notion that is not reflective of Canadians) is problematic. How to make Canadian national history work, by becoming more reflective and representative of the past, necessitates a way forward that allows for plural narratives as opposed to a singular grand narrative in the style of the old guard historians. As the Canadian historiography joke goes: “What’s the problem with Canadian historical writing? It’s Wrong, Shortt, and Careless.”<sup>1</sup> Attempting to alleviate the problems imposed by the old guard historical narrative is where I saw my place in Canadian historiography; to do my best to present historical narratives that were less wrong, short, and careless.

In his rebuttal to the problematic grand narrative, Stanley (2000) specifically calls for historical narratives that are antiracist, and in turn put forth “a richer and better history” (p. 80). While Stanley sees antiracist history as a way forward, and it surely is, I attest that it is only one of the ways we can disrupt the grand narrative and produce those “multiple overlapping histories” (Stanley, 2006, p. 47). Antiracist history helps combat notions of fixed identity. Moreover, I suggest that utilizing the region as a category of analysis in Canadian national history is another way to challenge the understanding of a singular, fixed Canadian identity.

The idea of questioning and challenging the nationalist historical framework is where I firmly sit and have sat since I began ardently studying and producing Canadian history. Stanley’s work in antiracism has caused him to kill the grand narrative of Canadian national history. As Stanley (2000) explains, grand narratives “identify who belongs in the nation and in what ways” (p. 82). Thus, my work on Canadian national identity challenges the notion of singularity

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1. Much thanks and appreciation for my MA (history) supervisor Dr. Kurt Korneski for regaling me with that joke when I began studying Canadian historiography.

upheld by the grand narrative in focusing on regional understandings of Canada.

More specifically, my recent work addresses Newfoundland's (and to a lesser extent, Labrador's) place in Canada. As Stanley (2000) has stated, the grand narrative "places people in different positions in relation to the nation. Some people who live in Canada can claim this history, and hence the status of being 'Canadian,' as their own. Others cannot" (p. 83). This can be said in relation to Newfoundland and Labrador's (and its peoples) place in Canada. As mentioned, the mere adding-on of marginalized "others" to the historical narrative can marginalize peoples and groups, which in turn can affect present-day understandings and associations. This appears to be a factor in why Newfoundlanders continue to be "othered" in Canada.

Lastly, Stanley (2000) dutifully noted that grand narratives are often used for pedagogical and academic organization, such as textbooks, courses, and areas of focus. Canadian historians are generally broken down between pre- and post-Confederation periods. Where I focus on post-1949, when Newfoundland joined Canada, such temporal organization can be rather tricky, as I am not all that interested or especially suited for the entire post-Confederation era. When considering the problematic and Eurocentric focus that a temporal split organized around Confederation, the grand narrative becomes less-and-less appropriate but nevertheless often remains to be a "major organizational division" in textbooks (Stanley, 2000, p. 89).

Stanley's admission of killing Canadian history helped me to see myself as a Canadian historian. Through his conviction, I was better able to understand my place in Canadian historical writing. Stanley's critique of the predominantly nationalist framework of Canadian historiography allowed me to recognize not only how my critical approach to the history of Canadian national identity would fit, but also that it was needed in Canadian historical writing. His questioning and challenging of the grand narrative inspired me to consider ways of recasting "Canadian" histories to better reflect historical narratives of what constitutes "Canada" and "Canadians." It is through his challenging of Canadian historical writing and his call to recast the grand narrative, with a particular effort to pluralize and complicate the narrative, that Stanley (2002a) killed Canadian history. Therefore, I understood that in constructing the historical narratives that I sought to produce, I too would be killing Canadian history, and it was then that I knew I was on the right path.

When Stanley (2000) confirmed that his “efforts to ‘kill’ Canadian history have been, at least in part, intended,” it became a call to arms for a generation of emerging Canadian historians to reconsider what we had long been told, taught, and considered (p. 102). No longer should we be content to add to, or merely revise, the existing interpretive versions of Canadian history created by an old guard and their disciples. It was and is time to move beyond this way of understanding and interpreting the past and what that past was understood to be. Now, new voices from the past are to be heard and new perceptions of what the past was are to be considered. Stanley (2000) put forth a plea not to simply put a new grand narrative in place of the old interpretations, but also to recognize that “Canada’s historical narratives should be plural, ‘small,’ and written in multiple ways” (p. 102). It is these smaller narratives that I push for, through reconceptualizing the ways Canada and its history are understood—particularly in terms of regional perspectives of Canada’s history.

With his work seated firmly in antiracist history, Stanley (2000) insists that such historical work “provides a better basis for understanding the past because it sees context more broadly than the nationalist framework and entertains a series of richer questions” (p. 102). When we challenge the status quo of the historical narrative, we expose its failings and become able to present improved reflections of the past. While my work does not directly lend itself to antiracist historical accounts, it does directly challenge the homogenous imageries and understandings of Canada’s past, its identities, and its peoples.

During my master’s program, through Canadian historians such as Stanley, I saw that through a recast of the grand narrative, alternative narratives could be (re)produced, (re)told, and (re)imagined, and now my work is a part of that effort. Where Stanley has used racisms, I use identities (regional, national, cultural, official, and otherwise) and regionalism. The work I have produced challenges past understandings of a monolithic English-Canadian identity, as well as officialized Canadian identities. In addition to challenging depictions of officialized Canadian identities, my current work continues to question the grand narrative, its imposed timeline, and its necessity of a national identity that is predicated on uniformity.

For that, I have Tim Stanley (among others) to thank for their influence and guidance, whether through their direct supervision, their written work (in the case of Stanley), or inadvertent influence.

Stanley's critical take on the grand narrative of Canadian history helped me to rectify my internal conflict of the desire to work on Canadian national identity but ultimately finding Canadian nationalist historiography to be unsatisfactory and problematic; thus, enabling me to identify my place as a Canadian historian. Stanley admitted that his efforts to kill Canadian history were intentional, and so are mine.

## The Canadian History Hall Revisited

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Lindsay Gibson

Most scholars hope that by the end of their careers they have made a significant impact and contribution to their field. Dr. Tim Stanley is unusual in that his teaching, scholarship, and graduate student mentorship have made enormous contributions to five distinct and related fields including antiracism education, Asian Canadian studies, history of education, Canadian history, and history education. Personally speaking, Stanley's scholarship has been formative for my research, writing, and teaching since first encountering it in my work with The Critical Thinking Consortium (TC<sup>2</sup>) as a writer and project manager for the Chinese Canadian Stories: Uncommon Histories from a Common Past project from 2010–2012.<sup>1</sup> Led by Dr. Henry Yu, this multidisciplinary project aimed to “reshape the way all of us understand Canada, and reclaim the forgotten histories of peoples who have long been ignored in Canadian history.” The Chinese Canadian Stories team hired TC<sup>2</sup> to create digital learning resources and teaching materials for Grades 5–12 students that utilized historical materials created by the project. As the writer of many of the learning resources for TC<sup>2</sup>, I had to get up to speed on Chinese Canadian history, and Henry recommended I read publications by Edgar Wickberg (1982), Peter S. Li (1998), and Tim Stanley (1990, 2002a, 2007).

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1. Chinese Canadian Stories <https://instrcc.ubc.ca/archive/chinesecanadianstories/>.

When I began working on the project, I had just completed the first year of my PhD in history and social studies education in the Department of Curriculum and Pedagogy at the University of British Columbia. Prior to starting my PhD, I taught secondary school social studies and history for ten years and felt pretty confident about my understanding of Canadian history and how to teach it. I vividly remember being taken aback by a conversation with Henry Yu in the early days of the project in which he said, “Canada was founded as a white supremacist country.” Henry’s statement shocked me because I associated white supremacy with extremist groups like the Ku Klux Klan and saw racist acts towards Chinese Canadians and other marginalized groups in Canadian history as aberrant behaviour, not a fundamental feature. As I learned more about Chinese Canadian history and the mistreatment of other marginalized groups including Indigenous Peoples, Japanese Canadians, Jewish people, and Black Canadians, it became clear to me that Henry’s statement was not a provocative interpretation but a historical fact. As Stanley (2000) argues, racism in Canada is not based on “individual prejudice or discriminatory actions alone,” but a “generalized social phenomenon” that has shaped politics and other aspects of history (p. 94). This realization transformed my understanding of Canadian history, the history of racism, and the aims, purposes, and methods of history education.

Rather than take a hagiographical approach and describe my favourite Tim Stanley publications and the various ways they have influenced me (of which I am sure he would disapprove), I focus instead on a memorable presentation Stanley made at the 2017 Historical Thinking Summer Institute that was held from the 17 July to 21 July at the Canadian Museum of History (CMH) and the Canadian War Museum (CWM).

After Peter Seixas’s retirement in 2016, I became the director of the Historical Thinking Project (HTP), and one of my responsibilities was to organize the annual Historical Thinking Summer Institute (HTSI). The HTSI is designed for teachers, curriculum developers, graduate students, professional learning specialists, historians, and museum professionals interested in taking a critical approach to the design and development of programs, courses, units, lessons, projects, exhibits, or educational resources that explicitly focus on historical thinking. For the 2017 HTSI, the HTP collaborated with Canada’s National History Society, the CMH, and the CWM to organize an HTSI focused on the theme “Thinking Historically About Canada 150.”

The HTSI coincided with the contested yearlong commemoration of the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Canadian Confederation, which included the First of July opening of the new Canadian History Hall (CHH) at the CMH. Throughout the five-day institute, 60 participants explored six historical thinking concepts (evidence, significance, continuity and change, cause and consequence, perspective-taking, and the ethical dimension) included in Seixas's (2006) historical thinking framework in a variety of workshops, small and large group discussions, guest presentations, and group work that utilized primary sources, artefacts, and exhibitions at the CMH and CWM. Each afternoon we invited guest speakers including historians, curators, archivists, K–12 teachers, and museum educators to make 30- to 45-minute presentations that illustrated how they approach the historical thinking concept being focused on that day in their professional context.

The first day of the 2017 HTSI focused on introducing historical thinking and deepening participants' understanding of the historical significance concept. Historical significance presents some of the most fundamental and unavoidable considerations in historical thinking. The past is everything that ever happened to everyone everywhere, but we cannot study or remember everything that has happened. History by its nature is selective, and anyone involved in teaching, writing, or researching history makes decisions about what to study, how to describe it, and how individual events, developments, and people fit into larger narratives of the past. Thus, historical significance raises essential questions about which events, people, and developments from the past should be learned about and remembered (Stipp et al., 2017). The failure to consider how and why some topics are selected for study and not others may lead people to simply accept that the events or people included in the curriculum, featured in a museum exhibit, or commemorated on a statue are historically significant. They may overlook the possibility that other important events, people, issues, and perspectives have been excluded because they were not deemed to be historically significant by the people who constructed the historical narrative. Only by critically examining the reasons for the inclusion and exclusion of particular people, events, and details in historical narratives can we appreciate the significance, and therefore the meaning, of everything learned about in history.

I invited Tim Stanley to present on the first day of the HTSI because his 2006 chapter "Whose Public? Whose Memory? Racisms, Grand Narratives, and Canadian History" is central to both the theme

of the HTSI and the historical significance concept, and would be an engaging and accessible chapter for participants to read prior to the 2017 HTSI. In the chapter, Stanley argues that public memory, which includes representations of the past made available through mass media, museums, public school curricula and textbooks, monuments and historical plaques, public ceremonies, and popular and academic history books, is one way that racist exclusion is enacted. Public memory contributes to the creation of a nationalist, English-Canadian grand narrative that includes some people in the imagined community of Canada, while excluding and ignoring racialized others (p. 33). Although there are several variations of the English-Canadian grand narrative, Stanley identifies several common features. The narrative starts with the arrival of European explorers and settlers, focuses on European settlement and nation building by visionary men (and infrequently women), while disregarding non-Europeans. Confederation is the major turning point, and the present dominance of European Canadians, marginalization of Indigenous Peoples, infantilization of Quebecers, and exclusion of Asian and Africans are all made to seem inevitable and natural. Given the dominance of the Anglo-Canadian grand narrative in public memory, Stanley argues that it is unable to represent people's lived histories of racism, and in turn put forth three examples to prove his point: the 2001 Dominion Institute/Ipsos-Reid Canada Day survey, the CHH permanent exhibit that opened in October 2000, and Margaret Conrad and Alvin Finkel's (2006) survey textbook. Stanley concludes the chapter by calling for a re-imagining of our approach to history education that replaces "the monolith of grand narrative with a web of multiple overlapping histories" (p. 47). To accomplish this curricular and pedagogical call to action, he suggests that students should be invited to explore their own past and construct narratives that explain how they come to inhabit common spaces. The upshot of this approach for Stanley is that it can help students see how their personal histories intertwine with the multiple communities they are connected to, and to understand that the spaces they inhabit have been constructed by people who came before them.

Stanley's critique of the 2000 version of the CHH in his chapter and the opening of the new CHH two weeks before the HTSI presented the perfect opportunity to invite him to assess whether his 2006 critique can be applied to the 2017 CHH revision. I pitched my plan and Tim confirmed that he was "delighted to discuss whether my critique still applies." He also informed me that from 2013 to 2017

he had been a member of the new CHH General Advisory Committee (GAC) and was looking forward to the opportunity to assess the final product. We confirmed the details of his presentation over the next few months. We decided to ask HTSI participants to read the 2006 chapter prior to the HTSI, and on the afternoon of the 17 July Stanley would give a 30-minute presentation about the chapter and answer questions. Participants would then be invited to tour the CHH for an hour to determine whether Stanley's critique of the 2000 CHH applied to the 2017 version. The group would then reconvene to discuss its findings, and Stanley would share his analysis of the new CHH.

Stanley opened his presentation by describing the problems of historical significance. Although some events are more significant than others in terms of the consequences they have on people's lives, historical significance is constructed by people who connect two or more events together into narratives that are neither natural nor inevitable. Stanley discussed three problematic aspects of the relationship between nationalism and historical significance. First, historical significance is often linked to national history, and as a result, who is included in the imagined community, when, and how is always contested terrain. Second, even the most inclusive nationalisms create boundaries between those inside and outside the state. Third, nationalism is a destructive force capable of mobilizing millions of people to murder each other.

As discussed by history educators, decisions about historical significance are shaped by where you live, your ethnicity and nationality, your gender identity, how your life has been affected by the nation-state, and what you are told about your history (e.g., Barton & Levstik, 1998; Cercadillo, 2001; Gibson et al., 2022; Peck, 2010). Stanley highlighted a variety of Canadian demographic statistics to demonstrate how linking historical significance to nationalist Anglo-Canadian grand narratives marginalizes many Canadians. Stanley also problematized the "taken-for-grantedness" of Canadian history as framed by a teleological Anglo-Canadian grand narrative that "imposes an organization on the past that starts with the present and works backwards" (Stanley, 2006, p. 34). It was not inevitable that Canada would become a country comprised of ten provinces and three territories, and Stanley used a variety of maps to illustrate this point including Indigenous language and political maps of North America prior to European contact, and a map of the small area of land Europeans inhabited at the time of British Conquest in 1763. Stanley also asked

participants to consider when the founding of Canada was. Was it the founding of Quebec in 1608? The creation of Upper and Lower Canada in 1791? Was it when four British colonies agreed to the terms of Confederation in 1867 while the rest of what is now Canada was Indigenous territory?

To conclude the opening part of his presentation, Stanley reminded participants that defining the significance of an event or person in relation to the nation-state is an act of power that can marginalize those who do not see themselves in the nationalist web of significance. The pedagogical challenge for educators, according to Stanley, is to help students understand what is historically significant to their lives. Stanley presented participants with one big question and three sub-questions to consider while they toured the CHH.

- How does the museum create knowledge of who/what is Canadian?
  - o Who/What is being included?
  - o Who/What is being excluded?
  - o How do the inclusions and exclusions of the museum create historical significance? (Stanley, 2017b)

After exploring the CHH for an hour, participants returned to the atelier to share their responses to Stanley's questions. What followed was a stimulating 30-minute discussion during which HTSI participants identified many examples of inclusions and exclusions that they felt defined who and what is considered Canadian. The conversation could have continued for at least another hour, but with ten minutes to go before the end of the day, Stanley shared his thoughts about the new CHH.

Stanley described his experiences as a member of the GAC that was tasked with commenting on the overall design of the three galleries in the CHH and the drafts of the text panels. He commended the CMH staff for genuinely listening to the GAC, the Indigenous Advisory Committee, the committee of historians, and community feedback. He emphasized the challenges of trying to balance historical content and issues of presentation, representation, and exhibit design. Despite these challenges, Stanley complimented the new CHH for being "the most inclusive account of Canadian history ever produced," because it highlighted the significance of Indigenous Peoples and made real efforts to reflect histories of racism and

exclusion that will be “eye-opening for many Canadians” (Stanley, 2017b).

Stanley also raised several incisive critiques. Given the nationalist mandate of the CHH, Stanley concluded that the CHH still presents a teleological and nationalistic grand narrative of Canada as a multicultural country. The CHH also enacts what Stanley described as “symbolic colonialism” by including Gallery One: Early Canada (human arrival in North America to 1763) as part of Canadian history. Furthermore, the CHH does not adequately portray the nature of colonialism and racism as ongoing phenomena rather than events in the distant past. This includes the recognition that Canada was founded as a white supremacist country that purposefully denied rights to people of colour, and that the Canadian state took over the territory now called Canada and sought to destroy Indigenous Peoples, their societies, and cultures. Although the violence of residential schools is included in the CHH, it is portrayed as an unfortunate side effect of colonialism, not the main point. Stanley also criticized the CHH for being too Eastern Canadian-centric and disregarding other regions, and for not including enough about children, workers, and Métis. Lastly, he felt as though the CHH could have done more to highlight the transglobal connections between people inside and outside of Canada. Ever the educator Stanley gave the CHH the following grades.

**Table 7.1.**

| Criteria  | Grade |
|---|-------|
| Design  | A+    |
| Contents  | A     |
| Educational Value                                     | A-    |
| Narrative Framing                                     | B     |
| Capacity to teach historical thinking                 | B+    |
| Ability to teach about ongoing racism and colonialism | B     |

With time running out, Stanley reiterated his 2006 call to reimagine an approach to history education that will supplant nationalist grand narratives. This involves asking young people to understand their histories, promoting an understanding of how our personal histories link to multiple communities, and learning how the spaces we inhabit have been manufactured by those who came before. Stanley ended his

presentation with one final question for participants to ponder: Will your students see themselves in the CHH?

Stanley's presentation exceeded my expectations. It was critical, provocative, fair-minded, and inspiring. Despite being physically and mentally exhausted at the end of the first day, participants hung around to ask him questions and share their thoughts about the CHH. When I was finally able to pry Stanley out of the CMH, we celebrated in true Tim Stanley fashion—with a burger and a beer (or two) in his favourite pub in the ByWard Market. I want to thank him for the truly memorable experience and the body of thought-provoking scholarship that will continue to push my thinking, and for embodying the type of scholar and person I aspire to be. As memories of Canada 150 fade from public memory, I will remember the day that Dr. Tim Stanley revisited the Canadian History Hall.

# The Study of Afghan Textbooks for Citizenship Analysis Through the Work of Timothy Stanley

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Noorin Nazari

Knowledge transfer is a contested conception. It provokes us to question whether knowledge from one context can be transferred to a different context without losing its intended value and application. Critics dispute not only the applicability of a transferred knowledge into the new context but also its transferability. The latter challenge is of interest as knowledge transfer occurs through a number of interrelated factors involving linguistic and technological instruments, temporal and spatial changes, and power dynamics within and among various institutions involved in the process. This scenario brings about the question as to whether knowledge is intactly transferred, or rather, modified, transformed, and changed while passing through each step from the source to the host context.

The above statement comprises some of my initial thoughts when I embarked on my PhD dissertation that involved the use of Western knowledge to analyze the textbooks of my country of origin, Afghanistan. The overarching theme of my PhD dissertation is citizenship education in the public education system of the post-9/11 Afghanistan until the return of the Taliban to power in 2021. To achieve this objective, I conduct a textual analysis of a number of textbooks including history, civic education, and patriotism textbooks currently in use in the public schools of Afghanistan in spite of the Taliban rule. In a post-Cold War ideologies era, it is of interest to analyze what citizenship meanings did the education system of Afghanistan make

in the past two decades. My study is informed by four interrelated conceptions of the critical discourse analysis framework: power, ideology, identity, and culture.

Upon embarking on my PhD dissertation, one of my concerns was the question of whether my skills acquired in the Canadian academic context were employable in the context and texts of Afghanistan. Over the course of my academic endeavour with Stanley, I realized that knowledge is both transferable and applicable whilst it changes its specificities to accommodate the contextual realities of the new scenario in which knowledge is employed. The following is an illustration of this realization.

With Stanley's support, I was able to identify a credible source for the analysis of citizenship in the education sector of Afghanistan. My initial objective was to focus on the policies of the government. However, this alone could not have given me the exact meanings that the government constructed and passed on to the next generations. Stanley advised that I focus on textbooks and introduced me to a rich literature on textbooks that helped me appreciate text in general and textbooks in particular. I learned that all school textbooks, including science books, are influenced by state selection and should be treated as cultural artifacts (Lassing, 2009; Apple & Christian-Smith, 1991). I also learned that textbooks are more essential for in-class learning in developing countries due to teachers' poor mastery of subjects, limited access to national curriculum documents, and lack of supplementary teaching material (Greaney, 2006). I was able to establish the relationship between conflict and textbooks in post-conflict and divided societies. Textbooks in such settings have higher prominence given the social grievances and structural power dominance. Textbooks and other teaching material have the potential to "aggravate social unrest" because students come to class with a predetermined notion of socio-political discourses constructed in the confinements of their households (Bush & Saltarelli, 2000, p. 49). My scholarly interaction with Stanley enabled me to self-reflect on the integrity of the task I was going to embark on; that is, applying the knowledge I have learned at the University of Ottawa in relation to the contexts and texts about Afghanistan in relation to producing the different representations and articulations of a post-9/11 Afghanistan within its educational textbooks. To this end, I have benefited from a wealth of knowledge studying Stanley's scholarly work. With the support of Stanley's scholarship, I was able to apply the theoretical

and empirical Western knowledge in the analysis of textbooks of Afghanistan without compromising the specificities of the Afghan socio-cultural context. The following underscores some of my application of his scholarship.

### **The Impact of Timothy Stanley's Work on My PhD Dissertation**

The inevitable link between textual analysis and history became apparent during my studies with Stanley. "The great tradition of historical research is," as Stanley (2011) reminds us, "to read documents not just as artifacts but as windows on the past, in effect, to read through the document to an external reality" (p. 9). The reading of Afghan textbooks then is a window into the past. They contain rich narratives on the history of the people and of the land. An external reality is constructed in the textbook's text, illustrations, and choice of iconic individuals, events, and patriotic poetry. As such, the textbooks serve as a window to comprehend how the past has and continues to be painted in the present.

The history, civic education, and patriotism textbooks currently used in Afghan public schools promote a grand narrative for the country's past historical events and socio-economic developments. Stanley (2006) calls such grand narratives commonsensical representations of the past, which overlook public memory as they impose some histories while excluding others. Grand narratives overlook public memories, deliberately teach some histories, and remove parallel but marginalized histories and stories. In my re-readings of the history, civic education, and patriotism textbooks of Afghanistan, I noticed that certain historical periods, such as the decades of civil war (1970s to 2001) in which most student readers of the textbooks were born and raised, are missing. This is the case while most of the perpetrators of the crimes committed during the civil war decades hold high status in the political and social arenas of the country. The history that is emphasized in textbooks is the victories against external enemies, such as the British and the Russians. Although this historical representation articulates victories, it overlooks inequalities and masks the histories of the victims. While the inequalities and atrocities of the decades of civil war are vividly present in the memory of the people, the grand narrative of the school curriculum has overlooked their public memories.

The history, civic education, and patriotism textbooks currently in use in the public schools of Afghanistan promote a strong sense of

nationalism. On the one hand, a post-conflict society requires a cohesive national unity; on the other hand, it demands equality and justice if national unity is to be sustained. Over this paradoxical trade-off, I faced an intellectual dilemma. What normative values should we hold in choosing one or the other? How may we respond to the descriptive values presented in such texts? "While nationalist grand narratives purport to trace the origins of the 'imagined community' that makes the nation, they in fact," as Stanley (2000) stresses, "constitute it. They identify who belongs in the nation and in what ways" (p. 82). In the textbooks, attention is disproportionately skewed toward building an image of the people of Afghanistan that promotes nationalism and overlooks the diverse experiences of the peoples divided along ethnic, linguistic, religious, and cultural lines. In turn, I observed that in the construction of grand narratives in the civic education and patriotism textbooks of Afghanistan, the peoples' origin is highlighted with references to the Aryan race and the origin of their religion to Islam. Representations of a diverse people is not only exclusionary but also divisive in a country where national unity is preferred. Nation building is portrayed by national heroes who have won in the battlefields. The historical account of the country relates to narratives that put forth unidimensional interpretations of time, space, players, and events. There is more emphasis on the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Such singular narratives put forth representations of national unity at what cost? Who pays for it? And, if such unity is attained through the construction of grand narratives, are they sustainable or equitable?

In terms of the educational impacts of grand narratives, Stanley (2002b) reminds us, "the nationalist narratives that shape public memory in Canada, including public school history curricula, differently affect the inhabitants of an ethnically and culturally diverse society. These narratives place some people as inherent members of the 'imagined community' of the nation and others as outsiders to that community" (p. 1).

To reconcile such interpretations, I suggest that nationalistic grand narratives that are present in Afghan textbooks do not overtly promote any form of ethnic nationalism, nor did they claim that some people are the inherent members of the "imagined community" and not the others. However, Stanley's conceptions helped me reevaluate the text and notice that despite the acknowledgement of the existence of diversity in Afghanistan and the people as being "brothers," the narrative, the national heroes, the points of pride, and the language

of the national anthem, favoured only one segment of the society and rendered the rest absent. When certain people, their languages, and their customs are absent from history, they are excluded from a nationalistic “imagined community.”

If grand narratives are unjust due to their exclusionary nature, why is this a problem? “The statements of those privileged by racism cannot fully account for the effects of their own practices on the excluded. Understanding these effects,” as Stanley (2000) stresses, “requires engagement with the meanings of the excluded” (p. 99). Stanley’s scholarship offered me a conceptual tool to appreciate the narratives, meanings, and experiences of the excluded. I also realized that misrepresentation and absence make one side of the equation of inequality, but the impact of misrepresentation and absence of peoples is the other.

While Stanley believes that the selectivity of grand narratives requires a rethinking of history and curriculum, the key question remains as to what can be done when grand narratives are still the dominant narratives in the curriculum. Speaking of Canada, Stanley (2002b) calls for an approach through which every student finds their past in textbooks and compares their narrative with the interpretations of others present in the classroom. By emphasizing that knowledge of the past is available but not in circulation in the popular culture, Stanley (2009) advocates for extra effort in the classroom that would facilitate multiple voices. In his view, attending to the multiplicity of voices creates analytical opportunities for reinterpreting and challenging existing grand narratives. This statement presents a window for possibilities of recommendations that I may have with the objective to improve the curriculum and the in-class activities of teachers in Afghanistan.

Having an objective analysis of textbooks is important but still insufficient. There remains the question as to how a researcher connects the past and present to make meaning for today. More precisely, how can we not let the objectivity of today disrupt our understanding of yesterday. “While I am interested in making meaning of the past,” as Stanley (2000) writes, “it is decidedly not my purpose to impose today’s standards on past actions. Ultimately there is no way of knowing whether an historical interpretation corresponds to the real past itself, because the real past is not knowable except through interpretation” (p. 82). This view is critical for the case of Afghanistan. It reiterates that the standards and values that we hold today cannot judge

past actions. The human rights awareness that people in Afghanistan possess today and apply in making meaning of their lives, did not exist or was suppressed at the historical times that the textbooks allude to. The quote also indicates that the past is open to interpretation of all kinds. A statement contrary to this would have contradicted the notion that there should be no grand narratives but voices and interpretations of all groups. This approach is entirely absent in the Afghan textbooks despite its repeated acknowledgement of the existence of different peoples in the country. Stanley's quote also balances my concern of inflating claims of meaning-making as definite and permanent interpretations of a knowable reality.

The analysis of history textbooks is therefore recursive interpretive work, one that is continually in the making. As Stanley (2000) makes clear:

History at its best places, particulars in context, understanding them in terms of what else is happening at the time and place under investigation and what else is known about the history of the period. History in this sense is always unfinished. As previously unexplored records become available and as new questions are asked, so, too, new interpretations emerge. (p. 102)

This statement is rich in its appreciation of the vast future possibilities that we may have to interpret the past. However, it also requires an open attitude toward the unstable meanings of the past and an acceptance of redoing an analysis when there is new evidence. As Stanley (2011) asserts, "I read my documents as actively trying to fix and refix meanings that were slipping at the time the documents were produced" (p. 9). Beside a deliberate act of politically motivated intervention, according to this statement, slippage of meaning may also occur due to other prevailing limitations. Any reading of history is incomplete due to limitation of a space and time in finding more evidence. However, as we progress to develop new technologies and skills to conduct a more thorough historical analysis of text with more precision, an open attitude to redo our analysis becomes more crucial.

My attempt in supporting my knowledge claims faced not only the dilemma of self-reflexivity and my in-betweenness as a Canadian and an Afghan, but also the challenge of disturbing my subjectivity in the interest of knowledge credibility. As a beneficiary of the education system in Afghanistan and as an educationist, my experiences

and knowledge posed the challenge of compromising subjectivity in articulating my knowledge claims. Stanley's privately communicated Guidelines for supporting knowledge claims were customized to reflect examples of Afghanistan's textbook analysis, was an instant of knowledge transfer beyond the boundaries of set theoretical frameworks. Knowledge claims, as the communication elaborated, were of at least four interrelated primary types: common knowledge, authority, direct evidence, and author's scientifically articulated argument. Through such discussions, I came to the realization that a step forward from subjectivity to objectivity—to the extent possible—is a move from common knowledge to the author's scientifically articulated arguments.

In conclusion, it merits reiteration that Stanley's writings assured me that the politics of exclusion and inclusion is the same in all human societies. Modern nation-states attempt to maintain their legitimacy by establishing a strong and cohesive society with the assumption that this can be acquired through homogenization of different peoples, languages, cultures, and experiences. While the inaccuracy of this political approach is perhaps no longer controversial, educational approaches of nation-states in making meaning of the past remains a big challenge. Stanley's view, which has an emphasis on the multiplicity of interpretations and voices, is critical. It is pivotal for building an equitable society to educate new generations whose members can learn about their varied ancestral histories. However, as Stanley asks, how might the past be treated with an open attitude toward the analysis of history? No interpretation, as he notes, is complete and final, and no interpreting may hold the claim of presenting the "truth" of a knowable past. This strong and convincing argument can be the basis of change in any education sector, and consequently, will lead to the multiplicity of voices, narratives, and representations both in the overt and covert curriculums. Comparing the experiences of Afghanistan and Canada, I realize that knowledge transfer is essential for building academic bridges. My PhD dissertation on the conception of citizenship in the textbooks of Afghanistan will certainly benefit from the wealth of knowledge with which Stanley has generously provided me.



## Letters, Points, and Trajectories in the Work of Timothy Stanley

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Kent den Heyer

This does not mean I am responsible for all the ills in the world.  
It *does* mean I am not as far removed from them as I would sometimes like to imagine.

Stanley, 1999, p. 41

Since I started my university teaching career, at least one article by Timothy Stanley has always appeared on my social studies teacher education syllabi. I first read Stanley's (1998) "The Struggle for History: Historical Narratives and Anti-Racist Pedagogy" as a student in the University of British Columbia's (UBC) Department of Curriculum and Pedagogy and the Centre for the Study of Historical Consciousness. As the epigraph shows, from Stanley's "A Letter to My Children: Historical Memory and the Silences of Childhood," (1999) his scholarship still resonates with me, alongside that of R. I. Simon of the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education at the University of Toronto (OISE/UofT) (den Heyer, 2015). Their scholarship considers the curricular and pedagogical space of our collective pasts as much a haunting as a warning. They each ask that we learn from the experiences of the historically excluded, to attend to the holes in popular narrative wholes and to a "power-subjectivity-education" edifice produced by and productive of such historical silences that implicate and call upon us all.

Simon's commitment to these educational themes runs throughout his many contributions as I try to summarize:

Animated by the Jewish call for *Zakhor*, the injunction to remember well, for Roger any discussion of historical consciousness involved both a moral obligation to remember community, and, an imperative to engage remembrance practices as an ethical type of performance filled with poetic disjuncture from which communities to come might emerge. As a social practice, remembrance links past to present and to a hoped for “futuraity” through an invocation and lived enactment of our mutuality. From Roger I learned that identities, identifications, and commonplace templates of storytelling contain within their very expression fragment, fracture, and palimpsest. (den Heyer, 2014, p. 45)

For Stanley (1999), history’s alleged distance in the past endangers our mutual thriving:

Nazism is not merely historical. Today there are Nazis, sometimes mistakenly called neo-Nazis as if in fact they are something new, in many countries, including our own. Indeed, the growing respectability of white supremacist and fascist groups is one of the emerging crises of our time. To have given a “safe” answer suggesting that Nazism is far removed from the realities of our lives, by both time and distance, would have been simply wrong. (p. 35)

In 2019, van Kessel wrote that Stanley’s scholarship puts forth historical nuances that trouble “the idea of a radical essence of evil in favour of a stance that implicates us all in our time, one that, interestingly, intentionally utilized the word ‘evil’ and yet with the utmost thoughtfulness” (p. 8). Writing as I am in North America in the fall of 2022, I think again with Stanley and Simon about the fact that “the past is never dead. It’s not even past” (Faulkner, 1951, p. 85).

Distinctly, both Stanley and Simon call our attention to narratives as objects of pedagogical import “whose epistemological status differs from the facts incorporated into them” (Shemilt, 2000, p. 87). Each focuses on the implications of the axiom that facts do not speak for themselves. Facts (i.e., dates and events, questions about who did what when) and knowledge of geography are one level of historical knowledge, while knowledge of the narratives that link or “emplot” these data into significant wholes are another. Indeed, in response to Granatstein’s (1998) book *Who Killed Canadian History?*, Stanley (2000) writes that he would welcome any credit for killing Canadian

history as he continued to challenge both the veracity and educational benefits of schooling's repetitive reliance on an oversimplified racist nation-state narrative.

In response, Stanley calls for a reimagining of history education that attends to local, familial, and community narratives: "Through such a reimagining of history, by replacing the monolith of grand narrative with a web of multiple overlapping histories, we can help to insure that the real communities in which we live, rather than racisms, endure" (Stanley, 2006, p. 47). Called upon to reimagine and resonate scholarship on remembrance practices first taken up by Simon (2005), I work with pre-service teachers to develop what I name as narrative dexterity by telling alternative stories with differing emplotments than that of an elite generated grand narrative.

In a project to practise narrative dexterity, I ask students to tell the story of Canada in video format from two "historical perspectives" (for a total of eight video minutes using any format and program they wish) (den Heyer, 2019). The only restriction is that they cannot retell the grand narrative we use Stanley (2006) to deconstruct. Almost all students report in their required post-project reflection papers that this was their most difficult university assignment.

Students faced many challenges perhaps most powerfully summed up here:

During the process of creating the video, I wrote out the narrations that I wanted to use during the bulk of the video. The first was to come from a supremacist perspective. The challenge that arose intellectually was the realization that it was easy to write; frankly, too easy [...] This is a bit startling. It feels like there is a genuine racist somewhere in me that is being suppressed. That is not something that I want to believe. Conversely, for the second narrative, I found writing the script from a feminist perspective to be frustrating, in some ways, daunting [...] I could easily replicate the "angry feminist" voice, that wasn't the problem. There simply was a tension for me in that my internal reaction to feminism was not what my rational brain knows. I have to pose the question to myself: Why is it easier for me to become a racial supremacist than a feminist? (den Heyer & Abbott, 2011, p. 625)

Such are the "reverberating echoes" of an encounter with the dissonance at the heart of racialized identifications (Scott, 2001).

Another student sums up her exploration of the challenges of representation, construction of alternative historical narratives, and the difficulty of teaching a marginalized perspective: “I feel that might be the point of the assignment, to grapple with the difficulty of giving another perspective. All groups of people are complex and have complexities” (den Heyer & Abbott, 2011, pp. 627–628).

While students faced difficulties providing alternative perspectives, some began to recognize a need to do so to approximate historical-contemporary complexities of events and situations in addition to groups: “The idea,” according to one, “of capturing only the most important aspects of a situation based on a single group’s perspective seemed almost impossible; realistically I am not doing the event any kind of justice” (den Heyer & Abbott, 2011, p. 628).

With Stanley, I see in these reflections a need for a different type of approach to history education; one where teachers help students historicize predominant racialized plotments such as the “rise of the West” narrative (for an example of doing so in grade 10, see den Heyer, 2005).

Stanley writes with what Sandra Harding (1995) termed “strong objectivity” in which an author shares the why(s) of a scientific endeavour to allow readers a clearer vantage point to judge what emerges from the study process (for a beautiful exposition of the denial of, and case for, ethical commitment in history making, see Jenkins, 2004). As I read them, both Simon’s and Stanley’s “strong objectivity” lies firmly grounded in their commitment to “an ethics of subjectivity, a politics of emancipation and an aesthetics of freedom” (Biesta & Säfström, 2011, p. 542).

In my classes, their work provokes students to encounter anew what they have already learned but have yet to recognize: “[F]rom kindergarten to graduation, we are constantly bombarded (and completely unaware) of the grand narrative. We learn how white men *civilized* the aboriginals, settled North America and created *Canada*” (den Heyer & Abbott, 2011, p. 624; emphasis in original). While the film *Run Lola Run* (1998) initially provided me an inspirational template for this project, Stanley later provided the intellectual heft.

Stanley’s (2006) chapter “Whose Public? Whose Memory? Racisms, Grand Narratives, and Canadian History” still holds prime spot on my undergraduate social studies “methods” syllabus. On that day, I look forward to converse with an undeniable troubling of what many students had taken as just “facts.” What

may we learn about teaching from re-reading what and how we have been taught?

At this point in my university career, I ask what trajectories do an author's points likely instigate? Whose letters render inherited frames mute? What new beginnings from this reading will I and students likely encounter? Having discussed with students Stanley's and Simon's work so many times I am unsure whether I could distinguish their influence in my orientation and study of history education, commemoration, and public memory. Not important for me to do so but to publicly recognize each for the shape I am in. I am grateful for the work!



PART III

# **Mentorship**



## The Accidental (Not Occidental) Anti-Essentialist Antiracist Educator

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Doug Tateishi

History can help with antiracist projects. Historical understandings makes visible the vast silences and exclusions that frame our day-to-day cultural landscapes. Meanwhile, disciplined investigation of the past can bring into circulation previously excluded knowledge. It can document the constructed nature of racializations.

Stanley, 2011, p. 236

**T**he University of Ottawa, like all universities, requires PhD students to find a supervisor willing and able to guide them throughout the research and the writing of their thesis. In doing so, the student should verify their compatibility with a potential supervisor's philosophical and theoretical approach to ascertain whether they are interested and available for the required collaboration. I knew Stanley was a professor and an antiracist historian. As my supervisor and mentor, he inspired me to revisit my personal and professional history. He helped me to use previously excluded knowledge to analyze and problematize the past and present educational landscape for racialized minority students to imagine a reformed future. In what follows, I share how my supervisor needed to call upon his considerable expertise to support a racialized Japanese-Canadian teacher in his metamorphosis from an accidental to an anti-essentialist antiracist educator capable of organizing his experiences into a doctoral thesis (Aoki, 1986).

Upon completing my master's in education at McGill University, I had some preliminary conversations about pursuing a doctorate. Shortly after these conversations, however, I accepted a job as a superintendent in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA). Distance and the logistics put the possibility of the doctorate on hold. Years later, prior to introducing Marie Josée Berger, the dean of the Faculty of Education, at the University of Ottawa at an Ontario Ministry of Education event, she asked if I was still planning to pursue further studies at McGill. In 2008, she and I had worked together on a research project for the Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy where I shared that I someday hoped to pursue a doctorate in equity or antiracist education. After my presentation, I had lunch with Marie Josée who introduced me to Timothy Stanley who was the vice-dean of programs at the Faculty of Education. She encouraged me to share my background and academic interests. I enjoyed our ensuing conversations and found that we both had a love for teaching and long histories with antiracist education.

I understand that every PhD student's personal, professional, and academic lived histories contribute to a unique profile, just like all professors who are potential thesis supervisors. I was aware my experience of fifty years in schools as a student, teacher, principal, superintendent, associate director, and Ministry of Education official made up an unconventional and perhaps not ideal profile for a PhD student. Nevertheless, I set up an appointment with Stanley after our initial meeting to further share my interests and experiences and to investigate a possible collaboration. I was hoping that Stanley might find my workplace experiences mitigate the limitations of my age and my limited exposure to academia. At the conclusion of our meeting, Stanley suggested I take his course on antiracism and we could continue to discuss whether I should pursue the doctorate, which left me both encouraged and a little disappointed. I enjoyed the course and performed reasonably well. So, I was concerned when Stanley started our meeting by saying: "First off you write like a bureaucrat." Much to my relief, he then quickly added "but I think you have something important to say so I am willing to work with you and I think you should apply for the program."

In his course, I became more aware that the history of Canada is one of the racisms systematically and purposely directed at Indigenous and racialized minority communities, including Chinese Canadians and Japanese Canadians (Stanley, 2016b; Sunahara, 1981). I was, furthermore, introduced to his framework of anti-essentialist

antiracism (Stanley, 2011, 2014). His theoretical framework proposes the following: (1) Racisms exist in the plural; (2) All racisms involve racialization, exclusion, and consequences; and (3) The conditions for racism point to antiracist strategies for challenging racialization, fostering deracialized inclusions, and mitigating consequences (Stanley, 2014). As a teacher, I found this theory interesting. However, I was not sure how it could be applied to curriculum policy reforms. As a principal and superintendent, I struggled to imagine how it could be applied to both school and system improvement. Finally, as a ministry official, I wondered how it could be applied to curriculum policy and large-scale systems reform. In all my professional roles in schools, school boards, and with the ministry, I will admit that I was always suspicious of any theory of program not developed by a teacher or school board leader. Fortunately, Stanley guided my development as an academic systematically and strategically.

Stanley also encouraged me to study document analysis research methodologies with Sharon Cook. Prior to becoming a university professor, Sharon taught at the high school I attended. Although I had not taken a course from her in high school, I was aware of her reputation as an excellent teacher. Sharon provided me with the knowledge to critically analyze documents and allowed me to practise and refine my skills investigating ministry equity policies.

Upon completion of this course, Stanley suggested I take Nicholas Ng-A-Fook's course on curriculum theory. Nicholas also was a former teacher, who had worked in the school board where I served as associate director. I immediately felt a professional connection. Furthermore, as a former teacher, curriculum consultant, and superintendent of curriculum, I thought I would be comfortable with the subject matter. Ng-A-Fook introduced me to the thought-provoking world of curriculum theory and life-writing research. The course profoundly changed my understanding of curriculum. Both Pinar's (2012) theory of *currere* and Aoki's (1983) "Experiencing Ethnicity as a Japanese Canadian Teacher" opened my mind up toward understanding how my personal and professional lived experiences in turn informed my research and writing.

As I began to consider and write about my experiences of ethnicity as a Japanese-Canadian student and teacher, I kept coming back to Stanley's framework of anti-essentialist antiracisms. It helped me to critically reflect and understand what had happened during my elementary school days in Nova Scotia on the Shearwater naval base.

My first memory of being racially different and racialized at school is of a group of older students approaching me to ask what I was. I responded with my name, which did not satisfy them and only encouraged them to continue asking the same question. In retrospect, I believe they were curious about my identity and ethnicity because in Nova Scotia in the 1960s very few people looked like me. Three years later, at another school in Nova Scotia, a classmate brought in a newspaper article about the races of the world, which prompted my teacher in leading our class discussion to use me as an example of the “mongoloid” race. During the six decades that I spent in schools and education, I have been identified by others, due to my physical appearance, as Chinese, Japanese, mongoloid, yellow, oriental, Asian, east Asian, southeast Asian, visible minority, person of colour, racial minority, model minority, and Japanese Canadian. Along with these labels and racialized stereotypes came various expectations, biases, and perceptions about my culture, ethnicity, language, family, intellect, interests, hobbies, diet, behaviours, and academic and career aspirations. Inevitably, my experiences with race and racializations in schools influenced my own teaching practices as I attempted to provide what I recognize now having considered Stanley’s framework were deracialized inclusions for all the students in my classroom. As I reflected on his framework and the progression of my career, I was confronted with the realization that certain children, particularly Indigenous and racialized minority children, continually were being excluded and treated differently and thus were experiencing the consequences of racism.

Beginning in the early 1990s, my educational career was connected directly to antiracist education. I worked on the Ontario government’s two major reforms to combat racism in schools, first in 1993 and again in 2009. The first of these two reforms was the Ontario government’s most comprehensive and promising policy commitment to antiracist education. Despite the ministry’s commitment to antiracist education, history has shown the 1993 initiative did not result in the elimination of individual and systemic racism in school board policies, programs, and practices.

Rarely does a day go by without one of the top news stories identifying racist language and practices in Canadian society and its institutions. I have felt and seen racism perpetuated throughout my personal and professional experiences in education, first as a racial minority student and then as an educator. Indeed, over the course

of almost sixty years in schools I have become an expert, by accident of my situation and identity, on racism in schools. In performing my various professional roles as an educator, I have become convinced that the most effective way to combat racism is through the introduction and implementation of strategic antiracist education.

The research for my thesis proposes that this educational reform could be achieved if the Ministry of Education were to provide the policy direction and the appropriate pressures and supports (including professional development) for changing the individual and systemic knowledge and practices of educators in the various cultures of educators in school boards. I argue that the leadership of school board superintendents also is essential to successful implementation of strategic antiracist education. Superintendents first need to situate and verify the problem of racism in their school districts and then develop comprehensive plans for identifying and eliminating racism in all school board policies, programs, and practices. These plans must capitalize on teachers' moral purpose and inspire them to develop and deliver a curriculum that includes the lived experiences of all students.

I know that racism is real in Ontario classrooms and schools. Moreover, I am convinced that the most effective way to combat it is through strategic antiracist education. My collaborations with Stanley afforded me curricular and pedagogical opportunities to find a way to use my lived experiences to support my contentions. He enabled me to evolve as a researcher and writer. He very patiently read and responded to what seemed to me to be a never-ending number of iterations of each of the chapters of my thesis. He wisely and gently guided me to deeper levels of analysis. For example, although anti-essentialist antiracism is one of Stanley's most valuable academic contributions, he never suggested that it should be a major feature of my research. Instead, as my thesis developed, I came to realize how it could provide the theoretical framework for my research. Stanley supported me as I explored various methodologies to guide my research, including intrinsic case study, researcher-as-bricoleur, grounded theory, and finally constructivist grounded theory. As I became more immersed in the research, I realized that my conceptualization of strategic antiracist education and my lived experience of the organization and operation of school boards and educational reform were different from what I found in the existing literature. In the end, having been encouraged by Stanley to thoroughly explore my options, I was able to

confidently determine that constructivist grounded theory provided the flexibility to introduce different complementary methodologies, including Aoki's concept of the curriculum-as-lived. Such patience and guidance enabled me to develop a theoretical and methodological framework that in turn supported my research on Ontario educational policy reform.

Throughout numerous discussions with Stanley, I changed the focus of my research from the Ontario 2009 Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy, which I had helped develop, to the 1993 Antiracism and Ethnocultural Equity Policy. To assist in my analysis of the latter policy initiative, I developed my theory of strategic antiracist education based in large part on Stanley's framework. My thesis contends the following:

- (1) Racism exists in schools;
- (2) It involves racist exclusions stemming from racist policy and practice;
- (3) It results in negative consequences for those excluded; and
- (4) Strategic antiracist education must be the foundation of the policies to identify and eliminate these racisms.

Thus, Stanley's anti-essentialist antiracisms are the basis for my theoretical framework. In addition, they underlie and support all other components of my research, including my theory for educational reform.

Throughout my process of research and writing, he has routinely reminded me that he is a historian and how that influences his input and feedback. Ironically, regardless of how he self-identifies, I have found that he is one of the best teachers I have ever met. Like all good teachers, he provides strong encouragement and combines it with strategic and timely interventions, to enable students to discover new knowledge and awareness when they are ready to do so. I started this academic journey as a mature (old) and self-doubting student. I am extremely fortunate that a historian named Tim Stanley agreed to supervise my PhD studies because he was ideally suited to skilfully nurture and transform me from an accidental racialized student and teacher to an anti-essentialist antiracist educator.

# Not Just Another Bobby Orr: Reflections on Academic Genealogy and the Scholarship of Timothy J. Stanley

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Ken Montgomery

In late August 2019, to celebrate his retirement, I was invited to say a few words about the impact Dr. Timothy J. Stanley has had on me and my academic career. I scribbled down some notes on the flights to Ottawa that morning, just as I did so frequently while commuting via train from Toronto as a graduate student during the years when Stanley was the supervisor of both my master's and doctoral theses. At the Festschrift that had been organized in his honour that August afternoon, I endeavoured to express my immense gratitude to Stanley for changing the course of my life.

I am now revisiting and rewriting those notes of gratitude in the midst of a global pandemic, in a context of amplified public outcry over reoccurring and inexcusable police killings of unarmed Black and Indigenous people in both the United States and Canada, and on the very eve of an American presidential election that promises, no matter the result, to add fuel to the ever-present fires of racist violence that have been undeniably stoked by the rise of Donald Trump and his supporters. The Democratic Party's warm embrace of Black Lives Matter should not convince anyone that a Joe Biden presidency might have any more success than a Barack Obama presidency did when it comes to making tangible challenges to systemic racism that are rooted in the foundational structures and grand narratives of nation-states; that give shape to the imagined traditions, character, and soul of the nation; and that are so ingrained in institutional policies, social

systems, and public memories so as to reproduce white supremacy as the endemic, not intermittent, condition. Still, it is clear, particularly in its support for the diverse and courageous Black Lives Matter protestors who have faced down the threat of arrest, tear gas, and both rubber and real bullets, not to mention a deadly virus, the more just nation envisioned publicly by Biden, even with ample skepticism, represents a better path forward than the racist inferno awaiting us all should Trump, who appears to enjoy pouring gasoline on America's four-century-old fire, be re-elected.

Why, one might ask, should a Canadian such as I pay so much attention to the political system articulating with racisms in America? Well, those racisms are very much Canada's racisms and in at least two senses. First, and in contrast to the oft-repeated mythology that Canada is non- or even antiracist, the history and enduring legacy of this country is also one of white supremacy. Histories of racist appropriation by colonial oppressors, and concomitant histories of antiracist resistance by the oppressed, have been consistently obscured, erased, and excluded from public education and historical narrativization of even the most explicitly multicultural nations such as, but not limited to, Canada. Thus, while Canadians often tend to define themselves in opposition to America, especially when it comes to white-supremacist violence, the families and loved ones of Regis Korchinski-Paquet, Jason Collins, Eishia Hudson, D'Andre Campbell, Nicholas Gibbs, and numerous other Black and Indigenous people killed by Canadian police know otherwise. As Malcom X (1965) made clear, "truth is on the side of the oppressed" (p. 68). Stanley's (2011) historical research and teaching has elevated oppressed truths or subjugated knowledges, bringing them into historical consciousness to challenge the heretofore racialized exclusions of experiences that provide a fuller and more robust understandings of the complex world in which we live. Second, these are Canada's racisms too because the root causes of racisms are not simply located in the immediate or local context, but rather in the complex historical intersections of colonialism, race, gender, class, and other forms of social oppression. Racisms articulate with domination and exploitation across the globe and across time. The contrasts between those racially privileged lives in certain parts of Canada and those racially oppressed lives (and premature deaths) in the United States, Canada, or any other nation-state on earth may be stark, but the distance between these lives is not nearly as far as some might think. To put it differently, racialized whites may have

considerable ignorance of non-white racialized Others and the conditions of their lives yet have considerable power over them and, indeed, metaphorically consume the Other via common and taken-for-granted practices involving, for example, the food we eat, the clothes we wear, and the tourist destinations we visit (e.g., Apple, 1997; Trask, 1999). These are some of the truths about racisms that I have come to comprehend through Tim's mentorship and scholarship.

Allow me to return to the imminent American election and why it might matter for me to write about it in this expression of gratitude to my academic mentor. As the election has drawn closer, I have witnessed old friends, neighbours, family members, and some prominent sports figures who were my boyhood idols, such as Bobby Orr and Jack Nicklaus, publicly announce support for Trump's re-election, which I equate, fairly or not I suppose, to explicit support for white supremacy. Of course, this does not mean that either of my boyhood heroes are necessarily virulent white supremacists. However, it does illustrate an argument made by Charles Mills (1997) that the epistemology of ignorance, shaped through public histories and educational processes laden with racialized exclusions and subjugated truths, produces "the ironic outcome that whites will in general be unable to understand the world they themselves have made" (p. 18). The effect of this epistemology of ignorance is that most whites cannot, or will not, recognize the effects of white supremacy on bodies, minds, and spirits that are beaten, broken, or brutally ended nor do they, or will they, recognize the effects of white supremacy in what are made to seem as ordinary or natural spaces, places, and practices (Montgomery, 2008). This is an argument taken seriously by Stanley (1998, 2001) in his insistence that historians consider the role of racisms in shaping the world and in his consistent commitment to the position that antiracism provides a more accurate history than the nationalist modes that have dominated both popular culture and educational curricula. To the extent that I have come to know things differently than Bobby Orr, Jack Nicklaus, or the great many other white middle-class males who deny the reality of racism, its persistence, and its pervasiveness, I credit Stanley. With the notable exception of my father, Laurence Montgomery, none of the many wonderful and formally trained teachers I have come across in my life has had a greater impact on me and my life than Stanley. Under his mentorship, introspection and racial reckoning compelled a shift away from the bland routines and comforts of life toward a critical awareness of present conditions,

toward a more sophisticated, if always flawed, understanding of ethical relationality, and toward an even larger sense of responsibility to shine truth upon this problematic planet that we are obliged to share with one another. It was without question an awakening or liberation much more valuable even than the parchments I would eventually be awarded for completing my graduate studies.

Those graduate studies began for me at the University of Ottawa in 1996 when I enrolled in a course-based MEd degree program in second-language acquisition. At some point a year later, and I do not remember precisely why, I was required to register for an additional course. One of the few that fit my schedule was called Values Education, but I was obliged to get permission from the course instructor to register late for the course. After an intimidating interrogation, Stanley granted me permission to join the class. That moment changed my life. One of the first readings assigned to me was Joy Kogawa's *Obasan* about the internment of Japanese Canadians in the Second World War. I had just returned from five years in Japan, boasting of Canadian tolerance, and this book fractured my truths about Canadian multiculturalism, history, and egalitarianism. Through Stanley, I came to understand the imagined and banal dimensions of nationalism, the integral role of schools in helping us learn to understand ourselves in terms of national identity, and, crucially, the racialized exclusions historically articulated with the nation's limits and reinforced via legislation, state-sanctioned force, cultural practices, and both symbolic and literal walls. Early on in that Values Education course, we also read a chapter by Robert Miles (1989) entitled "On Signification," which similarly shattered my commonsensical understanding of the presumed biological reality of race. I, like many others, even through an egalitarian lens, took for granted that biological differences between humans mapped onto what are generally regarded as races and that members of one so-called race were fundamentally more similar to each other than to members of any other so-called race. I learned through Stanley that patterns of human variation defy racial categorization and that racisms are not about biology, but rather representational practices and performances that create and reproduce racialized exclusions and their consequences. These were not run-of-the-mill lessons, in either delivery or impact, but rather illuminating realizations that I think are best understood as epiphanies for that graduate student from two decades ago whose head was spinning with belated comprehension of the sheer magnitude of his ignorance.

Stanley proceeded to open up my world to the likes of Maxine Greene, Michel Foucault, Edward Said, Hannah Arendt, and many others. In turn, all these provocations were conceptually linked to Stanley's groundbreaking texts on race, nation, and historical narrativization. It was an awakening of sorts for me, but never in my wildest imagination did I think I would, or could, write a graduate thesis, let alone complete a PhD, become a university professor, or take on a university leadership role as dean of a Faculty of Education. The best teachers push us further than we think we are capable of. Stanley did that for me. While the move to administration has had the unfortunate consequence for me of limiting engagement with research and writing recently (insert gentle scolding from Tim here), everything I have published and so much of my teaching has been grounded in what I have learned from him. For this reason, but also because he was so generous and supportive (along with significant others, notably Sharon Cook, Terry Cook, Judith Robertson, and Lorna McLean) through an exceptionally difficult period of my very privileged life, it is no stretch for me to think of him as my academic father.

It proved quite difficult for me to utter those words during the *Festschrift*, which occurred only a few months after the passing of my dad in May of 2019, and I find it fascinating that I have become watery-eyed writing these words over a year later. Perhaps it illustrates the depth of connection we have with our parents, guardians, and other loved ones, and how much their stories are part of the stories we tell about ourselves. I feel this way about my dad to be sure, but I also feel that my narrative, both the academic and personal dimensions of it, has been irrevocably shaped through my relationship with Stanley. Unlike academics from most other disciplines, musicians, I have come to understand, regularly reference their lineage via the teachers who have influenced them along the way. In these genealogical accounts, for example, Beethoven's prized student was Carl Czerny, who became the most important teacher of Franz Liszt, who in turn, became one of the most influential pianists of all time. My point is not to arrogantly position myself as a Liszt or Czerny, but rather to highlight the significance of academic genealogy and that the important impact of Stanley's teaching and research has already travelled across generations. As his former student, I have gone on to teach thousands of students across four different universities. All these students, whether they know it or not, whether they liked it or not at the time, and even whether they have read or cited Stanley's

research or not, have been influenced by his teaching and scholarship, which runs through so much of what I do in various and diverse pedagogical contexts.

Stanley's "grand-students" have similarly turned their brains inside out and their lives upside down through scholarship linked to him, but of which he is likely unaware. This is not an exhaustive list, but James Oloo's 2016 doctoral work on the experiences of racialized minority teachers in rural Saskatchewan, Thomas Jing's 2017 doctoral examination of Afrocentricity and education through a cultural study lens, Tana Burrows's 2013 doctoral exploration of whiteness in the experience of high school social studies classrooms, Audrey Aamodt's 2020 complex and courageous doctoral illustration of white settler treaty responsibilities, and Krista Baliko's 2014 analysis of racialized representations of Omar Khadr in public spheres are but a few examples of Stanley's excellent grand-students. Many of his other grand-students (e.g., Katia Hildebrandt and Michele Sorensen) are now themselves excellent university teachers, shattering taken-for-granted assumptions as Stanley once did for me. Some, like Jesse Bazzul, already have their own grand-students, which I think makes Stanley a great-great academic grandfather. Of course, the double great is meant in both senses.

Stanley's scholarly and pedagogical reach has been profound—across physical space and multiple generations of committed scholars, teachers, activists, and, yes, even administrators. Tim's intellectual and activist insights inform administrative decisions about student and faculty recruitment, diversification strategies, curriculum review, community outreach activities, and public addresses. By way of example, I recently found myself working with an appropriately masked film crew to record the dean's address for the University of Windsor's first ever virtual convocation. In that recording, I implored our newly minted teachers to heed the advice of African-American educator, journalist, and civil rights leader Ida B. Wells by using the knowledge and experience wrapped up with their degrees to turn the light of truth upon the wrongs of racism, sexism, poverty, environmental destruction, and the many injustices attached to ability, sexuality, and gender identities (Bay, 2014). I think it would have been impossible for me to move beyond liberal gestures of empathy or abstract statements of concern in such contexts if not for Stanley, whose historical research and antiracism teaching have emphasized the need to ground our work in a revolutionary commitment against

systemic white supremacy and interlocking systems of oppression. It makes me very proud indeed to trace my academic lineage to one Timothy J. Stanley.

I will admit to having had moments of weakness in which I wondered what it would have been like if I had not taken that Values Education course and had simply gone on to live a blissfully ignorant life. Perhaps I would have found a critical calling of some kind, but more than likely I would have ended up becoming just another Bobby Orr. This not to suggest that my responsibilities toward understanding and contesting white supremacy are done, far from it, but to stress that I am extremely grateful to Stanley for having awakened me from the oppressive drudgery of unchallenged truth and to the liberating possibilities for changing the conditions of knowledge production so that fewer of us sit easily and comfortably in the illusionary sanctuary of ignorance. I would wager that Stanley's many academic offspring would say the same as we each seek to dismantle the white supremacist institutions that perpetrate violence through a plethora of social, economic, political, and educational policies and practices.



## “To Affect Eternity by Acting Through Others”: Timothy J. Stanley’s Graduate Student Mentorship

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Pamela Rogers

In “To See Life Grow: The Meaning of Mentorship,” Kaoru Yamamoto (1988) distinguishes four living dimensions for successful mentorship: to be seen, to see, to care and to live, and to see beyond. Yamamoto describes living the delicate act of mentorship as lying outside of professional skill-building, networking, and completing one’s degree, into the realm of helping a person become “more fully human” (p. 188). In turn, we might learn through that extension of oneself to increase the mentor’s “human potential” (p. 188). Graduate student mentorship then, for me, can be understood through living Yamamoto’s four dimensions of mentoring. And yet, while there are varying styles of mentorship, those that reach beyond the pragmatic outlines of professional obligation and into areas of fulfillment, personal development, and leadership, are much rarer in practice.

While academic mentorship, that is, teaching a graduate student how to adeptly research, write, and successfully complete their studies, takes time and patience to cultivate, in this piece I draw on my experiences with Tim Stanley in relation to his graduate and post-graduate mentorship in antiracism education, leadership, and ethics. In turn, I pay tribute to his contributions outside of his scholarly research. One facet of Stanley’s lasting work in his mentorship as a graduate student supervisor was his ability to create profound collegial connections, and building towards students’ futures, proving that “one can indeed affected eternity by acting through others” (Yamamoto, 1988, p. 187).

Indeed, although often overlooked, the art of graduate student mentorship is a lasting testament to a rich scholarly career.

### To Be Seen

Much has been written on doctoral student mentorship and its importance for students to finish the program, since as many as half of doctoral students do not complete their studies (Bagaka's et al., 2015; Zipp et al., 2009). Some of the reasons for this are alienation from the work, time management, life events, poor program fit, or other such real-world happenings in a student's life. Zipp et al. (2009) also note that the supervisor-student relationship can help or hinder a student's progress and success rate, and in some cases, if mentorship is not taken as an integral aspect of scholarship, then faculty might spend more time on their own academic endeavours without including the lives of their graduate students into what they consider to be their "work." Instead, mentorship can be seen as add-on and not as a key function of the professorate. A separation such as this can lead to mistrust, lack of guidance, and students not feeling fully integrated into their program of studies.

As an antidote, Yamamoto describes the necessity of "being seen" as the basis for transformative mentorship, where mentoring affords pedagogical opportunities to be understood, recognized, and appreciated for being part of the doctoral journey and all that it brings. This also entails the function of "*regard*—an acknowledgement of one's personhood as well as trust in what is and what is to come" (original emphasis, p. 184). To see someone in their full personhood as a mentor requires the relationship not to be an add-on or additional burden to the mentor, but rather a process of recognition for the relationship to begin on a footing of understanding and respect. This is not a simple or easy type of connection to cultivate. As a doctoral student under Stanley's supervision, between 2012 and 2018, I was always seen, respected, and guided where and when necessary. Stanley's mentorship epitomized the work of seeing a student, their intersectional lived experiences, with an understanding that each student's journey was unique. Moreover, he always explained that his time was best spent with his students—we were never a burden or an addition to his work—and as a doctoral student, this changed the way I understood the supervisory experience. In retrospect, the intentional, careful relationship-building through openness and respect

built a strong community of practice between supervisor and student, and amongst other faculty and graduate peers.

### To See

While "being seen" is a fundamental aspect of mentorship, to be able to guide another through a new and often difficult journey requires the skill of foresight. Adding to the concept of "being seen," Yamamoto reminds us that "to see" needs to be in equal measure (p. 184), where both the mentor and the mentee must be able to see for themselves yet remain open enough to be guided through iterative and often unstable realms of relationality. Further, they describe the process of teaching the *protégé* to see as requiring "painstaking guidance" and "rigorous expectations" to encourage the direction of the student without taking over their existence (p. 185). The delicate balance of guiding a student into a path they yet have knowledge about, while at the same time opening up enough space for the mentee to make their own mistakes and decisions, and follow their own internal compass, is a difficult and uncomfortable space for both parties. The mentor brings significant life experience and institutional memory to help the student "to see" what they do not yet understand. However, mentors have little control over the decisions their mentee will make, therefore, they must offer wisdom without the pressure to over-dictate.

For the last ten years that I have known Stanley, he has been a guide to help me "to see." First, as a stubborn doctoral student, who often believed I could "see" for myself, without knowing what I was looking for, and without fully understanding the processes and intricacies involved in my endeavours. Admittedly, this was frustrating as a graduate student to not only be wrong most of the time, but to also not be able to see clearly what I envisioned for myself, simply because I did not know how to grapple with the complexity and layers of situations I was facing. Decisions around research direction, publications, and professional development were easy to navigate with Stanley's expertise, as his advice was balanced, pragmatic, and provided a clear sense of what each potential pathway could provide in the future. However, Stanley's ear was equally as fine-tuned for the more difficult decisions, such as ethical teaching and collegial conundrums, strategies for managing the direction of one's career, and more personal issues with family and partners—situations Tim described as "the ones that keep you up at night." He would consistently offer

a listening ear or sounding board when I needed to discuss a difficult situation. Regardless of how busy he was, and being right as often as he was, those conversations did not only save me time and stress, but also offered comfort in knowing that I could trust his guidance. His mentorship has yet to end, as I still seek his wisdom when navigating issues of social justice, ethics, and professionalism, several years after I finished my doctorate. In this arena, Stanley's mentorship in showing one how "to see" was, and continues to be, invaluable.

### **To Care and to Live**

While the more relational aspects of mentorship involve building trust, understanding, and compassion between student and supervisor, there is an aspect that is difficult to describe, which is the future orientation underlying the purpose of mentorship. The purpose is to see and guide a person through a period of growth, which can be painful and bring about disillusionment and pitfalls if not navigated in a mature way. Yamamoto cautions against the difficulties with this aspect of mentorship as possibly falling into "self-absorption" and "aggrandizement," which he calls "no strangers to the realm of mentoring" (p. 186). The problem with such hero-worshipping mentoring relationships is that the student does not fully grow into their own, and their life becomes overshadowed by the identity of the bigger-than-life mentor. Instead of helping to "see life grow" organically, an egoic-driven carbon-copy is expected, which stifles the growth of the student.

To truly care about an individual's growth, and to allow life to expand, requires maturity on the part of the mentor. As Yamamoto (1988) describes, "more mature humans, which authentic mentors must be, thus hope and will for their charges. In so doing, the mentors themselves might catch a glimpse of their own immortality" (p. 186). This hope and will is not through the ego, but a higher calling to devote one's care to the growth of another—the ultimate accomplishment of an experienced teacher. As a student of Stanley's, but also as a friend and colleague of other students who have been mentored by him as a professor or ally, his ability to truly care for, and allow space to grow is well-known and trusted. Successes are shared, and praise, while not often given, is generous when it is in his highest regard. In this way, Stanley's mentorship reaches outside the bounds of good or bad, success or failure and is based on a mature, grounded approach

that allows mentees to sculpt their future selves alongside, but not under, a careful and guiding eye. This does not mean the path is without turmoil or miscommunication, but as a student I was always guaranteed the care, space, and time to grow as I needed.

### **To See Beyond**

The act of creating, as Yamamoto (1988) describes as the "mentoring process of creating through another," requires a maturing of self to be able to build with another, without ownership (p. 187). Likewise, the author argues that without being properly shown how to do this work, the student will likely not develop into a mentor in the future. Mentoring and teaching, therefore, are about more than skill acquisition and professional attainment; the future of such practices needs to be modelled and built slowly through repetition to continue well into the next generation. This mindset requires a mentor to "see beyond" their immediate sphere and create connections that allow the mentor to "see the world they themselves can only dream of through their faith and trust in the guided" (p. 187). In this way, seeing beyond oneself involves understanding that the development of leadership skills works to serve the larger academic community well into the future.

Stanley's work in creating student communities of practice, in antiracist praxis, leadership, and institutional advocacy, spiral outwards from the position of "seeing beyond." Each connection, relationship, and community building practice has worked toward creating a world better than the one we have today. Tim has created and led graduate student working groups, giving up his time in the evenings and weekends to mentor students one-on-one and in group settings. He has also implemented doctoral seminars, and guided cohorts of students in the PhD program, outside of his own thesis students. As a community and educational leader, for decades Tim has pushed for change in organizations and institutions he has worked within. He has also created spaces for workshopping ideas, sharing research, collegial praxis, and bringing students into conversations within the faculty where they feel they are heard as colleagues. I do not list these pieces as one-offs or as aspects that are tangential to his work, but they are integral to a holistic practice of scholarship that has endured years, peoples, and spaces, to all point in the direction of "seeing beyond" where we are now. In this work, he has been able to see his mentees take on their own opportunities, using the same trust

in community building practices, and antiracist methodologies that were instilled through scholarly and community work.

Stanley's scholarship and graduate student mentorship are aptly framed by Yamamoto's pillars. Stanley has been able to see his mentees' lives grow, but more importantly, has persistently taught generations of students how to dismantle structures of enduring inequality. This is a lifelong quest to reach one student at a time, with hopes of changing our collective potentialities. Ultimately, mentorship is about trust and is a metaphor for placing one's professional life in the care of someone they do not yet know—what Yamamoto (1988) describes as a relationship intended to promote transcendence and transformation, on the part of both the mentor and the *protégé*. This voyage of mentorship, as Yamamoto further points out, requires virtuosity, wisdom, and vision to “be able to see a person yet to be born” before they can see the path on their own (p.187). Stanley's approach to academic work and his mentoring, I suggest, are one and the same—they focus on seeing the humanity in all people, in our multi-faceted and often ugly histories and present realities, to creating a kinder future so we can possibly move forward together. This relationship, in the end, goes beyond the framing of one's time in graduate school, and has continued long after. One that has been transformative, kind, and timeless.

## “And So?”: Lessons from Timothy Stanley in Engaging Racisms in the World

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Nichole Grant

Communications between graduate students and their supervisors are important aspects of mentorship and learning. These come in many forms: feedback and discussion but also support and guidance. In my time as a graduate student with Stanley as my supervisor, for both my master’s and doctoral studies, these forms of communication have been incredibly formative. In this chapter, I think through the deep effects of those communications. Stanley had a phrase he would regularly use in communications that became a sort of refrain between us: “And so?”

I think I can say most of Tim’s many graduate students have encountered “And so?” on at least one occasion. For me, it usually came in the form of an email with just that query, followed by some very full ellipses. This was mostly after stretches of silence between us, when communication had lagged for any number of reasons—almost always of my own doing. I had, and in many ways still have, a habit of swirling my thinking and writing into dense knots of theorization; letting myself fall down the rabbit hole of reading and theorizing away from the world of the empirical. And when I encountered the open question—And so?—in my inbox, it would occasionally be a source of dread. It often felt like Stanley had caught me daydreaming. Yet in the moment of seeing that email query in my inbox, probably for the umpteenth time, I came to recognize the subtle power of “And so?” I came to recognize it is much more than

a prod at how my studies are going and what I have been up to since we last talked.

I want to argue that “And so?” encapsulates Tim’s approach to his antiracist work and show how I have learned from this refrain in developing my own antiracism thinking and practice. I reflect on three lessons from “And so?” as a communicative refrain and how it can deepen engagements with antiracism, particularly based in Stanley’s work, for those engaged in anti-oppressive educational research and practice.

### **“And So?": The Refrain**

Deleuze and Guattari (1987) describe a refrain as a rhythm that has become expressive. Like a bird’s song that marks its territory or a hashtag grounding a discussion, expressive consistency becomes territorial—it makes spaces and conceptualizes something in its making. It is in this sense that I understand “And so?” as an expressive refrain. In its repetitions it marks out a communicative and action-oriented space.

“And so?” was rhythmic in my communications with Tim, literally and figuratively. Literally as that bolded text of an unread email, or the comment margins on a piece my writing, and more figuratively appearing as a raised eyebrow or a pregnant pause in our discussions. In their rhythms I have encountered three lessons—and I know there are many others now and to come—that “And so?” has taught me. Poignantly these are personal lessons. They may be lessons others have learned long ago and others still have yet to learn. I am continually mindful in my reflection here that another lesson, from Tim and many other antiracism educators, is that the journey of antiracism is complex, both individually and communally. My experiences are only relational to others and cannot, indeed do not, encompass or speak for experiences outside of my own. It is my hope however that these reflections are helpful for others on their journeys in anti-oppressive thinking and practice and provide some insights into the deep and powerful effects of Stanley’s work.

#### *Lesson 1: “And so ... Who are you in this world of racisms?”*

I first met Stanley when taking his graduate studies course Racisms and Anti-Racisms in Education during my master’s program. It was

my very first semester. I was feeling the full effects of imposter syndrome and entirely like I might be in over my head with the extensive readings and journaling his course required. One of our first assignments was to respond to Peggy McIntosh's (1988/2004) iconic piece on the invisible knapsack of white privilege. Briefly, McIntosh's article makes the argument that white racialized privilege is like an invisible knapsack full of tools, passes, keys, tickets, and maps to help navigate the world that is particular to the racialized white experience in Western contexts. I admit much of these ideas were new to me at the time, and I worked hard to unpack my own feelings and thoughts before I packed them into my assigned response. After submitting, I felt that my response was inadequate, asked more questions than made statements, and simply showed my utter confusion and sense of being lost in the depth of my own banal racism as a racialized white body. It was one of my first encounters with my own whiteness and its tangible, real-world effects in my everyday reality.

Admittedly, there have been significant critiques of McIntosh's article, particularly in its abilities to enact antiracist orientations and actions for racialized white peoples, its reliance on an individualized understanding of racism, and its focus on the experience of white people over those of people of colour (see for e.g., Cabrera, 2017; Leonardo, 2004; Lensmire et al., 2013; Margolin, 2015; Solomona et al., 2005). Attending to these critiques, Stanley openly moved the class to acknowledge their affective reactions. We then engaged these critiques more directly reading Leonardo's (2004) argument to move from understanding individualized white privilege to the systems of power that make such a position possible—white supremacy.

Upon reflection, I see the assignment was to provoke un-comfort; to bring forth questions; to ask: "And so [...] How do you understand yourself in a world of racisms?" This moment of "And so?" is different for all of us, but it was through Stanley's pedagogy that he encouraged it come forth at one moment or another. My own "And so?" was provoked by engaging what whiteness, *my* whiteness, means in a world of racisms. This "And so?" is a lesson in acknowledging racialized positionality and identity; in understanding the complexities of a racialized identity in a racially structured society; in seeing the minute and everyday effects of these aspects and dynamics.

This "And so?" is not only Stanley's pedagogical method, but his scholarly one also: He documents the processes of racialized exclusion carefully, providing the racialized contexts for the present by

tracing racisms back through histories. With this mapping of racisms and how they have occurred, he asks his own “And so?” by offering his stance on antiracism: documenting the processes of racialized exclusions themselves, including excluding narratives, voices, and histories, and in turn mitigating the consequences of racisms in the world. As he describes himself: “My antiracist project is to disrupt the taken-for-granted nature of racial categorization and to establish how racisms organize racializations into exclusions” (Stanley, 2016b, p. 9). Using Stanley’s framework of racisms and antiracisms to document the processes of racialized cultural production in the everyday gives scholars something specific and concrete to work with (Stanley, 2012a, 2014). It asks: “And so [...] what can such documentation tell us about racisms in the world?” But it also gives an “And so [...] how do you respond? And so [...] what do we do with what we find?” His work, and particularly his methodology and framework, provide a means of engaging racisms in the world, but poignantly it does not end there—it opens the communicative space to further questions, further engagement—it refrains “And so?” And it is in this sense that I come to my next “And so?” lesson: “And so [...] How can you put what you know about racisms in the world to work?”

*Lesson 2: “And so? How can you put what you know about racisms in the world to work?”*

From those first moments of encountering “And so?,” Tim continued to support me, offering to be my master’s thesis supervisor. This was an opportunity for me to take on the implications of that first lesson and the many smaller lessons within it. I was encouraged by the “And so?” and Tim’s support, both in those words and in his supervision, to work in the world of racisms and further my engagement with processes of white supremacy. As I began my master’s thesis project, the second “And so?” lesson appeared again and again in our discussions. It was in the way Tim consistently drew the connections of theory and practice in antiracism work. Coming from an English literature background, going “beyond the text” was a bit foreign to me, but that initial “And so?” engagement and its effects also gave me a deep sense of the connections of racism to everyday life. Tim continued to show me the connections of theory with the world and that knowing *about* racisms, even knowing about one’s racialized and racist positionality, was not enough. Knowing brings with it the responsibility for action

in antiracist work. What this action looks like varies considerably of course. In the contexts of my graduate experience, Tim's "And so?" refrain spurned an engagement with the *processes* of racist production.

I began working through how racisms appeared in the world and the complexities of white supremacy by conducting a case study of an online blog *Stuff White People Like* (<https://stuffwhitepeoplelike.com>). The blog is a satirical take on the cultural performance of whiteness, and consequently, was a valuable place to engage how white supremacy is constructed, resisted, and negotiated in popular culture. I used Stanley's framework to document the contextual development of whiteness, theorizing that knowledge production of whiteness occurred along registers of dominance. These registers were enacting biological, performative, and hierarchical modes of production in the performance of whiteness, both by the blogger and the many user comments I engaged in my study (Lowe, 2012).

It was in probing this "And so?" further that Stanley and I came together and brought his insights and my case study into a collaborative chapter (Grant & Stanley, 2014). It was a moment of seeing his scholarly processes work towards an "And so?" statement on the processes of racialized dominance in the form of a metaphor of the wallpaper. I see too that this metaphor also asks another "And so?": And so, now that you have described the process of racialized dominance in its production, what does it mean? How do we intervene? It was the sorts of questions we left in the chapter as well—as if Stanley also wanted to leave me with an "And so?" for my future work: And so? we developed this, now what can this description do to change things? Again, it is in the refrain of continual engagement, in probing further that shows the communicative space and deep effects of "And so?"

### *Lesson 3: "And so ... How do you interrupt the processes of racisms in the world?"*

My master's thesis and the collaborative chapter did not go far beyond documenting the production of racialized dominance. In this sense the "And so?" refrain hangs over them even in this reflection. It is something Tim and I have discussed on many occasions: pushing the "And so?" of descriptive documentation towards change. And in part this is a critique Tim makes of antiracism work more broadly, drawing on Hage's (2016) sentiment that this is part of the "failure of

antiracism" (see Stanley, 2017a). It is an "And so?" that he has shown me he actively grapples with himself, which is a powerful moment of mentorship: showing his own continual engagement openly with his graduate students. And this too is the lesson of the refrain from his work: Antiracism is an ongoing project; to continually ask "And so?" of antiracism is part of antiracist work.

It is this lesson I continued to work through in my doctoral work. It is an "And so?" that asks one to find their own way to speak and participate in antiracist work in the world, one that Tim continually supports for me and all his graduate students. The "And so?" emails that interrupt my theoretical daydreaming bring me back to how to engage racism in the world—to remember to ground understanding in the world, to speak from the complex positions I find myself in in this world, and work with the world we have towards something we may have to come. I will always be mindful of Tim's "And so?" lessons and hope to find a similar refrain in my own work and pedagogy—one that continually asks for more, that asks one to work from where they are, to push forward, and to reckon with the world towards something better.

### **The Continuing Refrain of "And So?"**

On the surface, Stanley's "And so?" is a cheeky way of connecting with me as a graduate student. But more deeply, it is a way of drawing out the communicative space. "And so?" opens a space for reflection and for action. "And so?" was, and is, a call back to reality, to the world where racisms live, are produced, and continue. For me, in part, it is a breaking of the daydream of theorization towards a connected theorization in action. The first lesson of this refrain has led me to a continual deep engagement with understanding the politics and effects of racialized dominance and the structures and mechanisms of white supremacy in everyday material culture. In this work I sought other critical scholars who engaged their dominant positions in critical and nuanced ways and Tim continues to support and further this engagement. Scholars like McIntosh, but also Frankenburg (1993), Smith (1987), Haraway (1988, 1991), and Condon (2012). I continue to ask "And so?" of each as I read and learn. Yet I also recognize I need to engage the voices that speak to my dominant racialized identity in more critical ways—from scholars of colour and Indigenous scholars (Toni Morrison, Sara Ahmed, Sylvia Wynter, Rosi Braidotti, and Vanessa Andreotti among others).

The second lesson of "And so?" builds from the first and opens to the third; the refrains widen the circle of the communicative effects of Stanley's work and mentorship as I develop my own. Understanding one's positionality and the systemic complexity of the production of racism gives a starting point. This leads to engaging the processes through which racialization and its production occur. In turn, it moves further to probing how these processes can be interrupted and changed.

"And so?" is a call to action *in* this world; a question of provoking continual antiracist response. It is also a connection to the not yet known, to the continual project of antiracism that Stanley advocates in his work and his pedagogy (see for e.g., Stanley, 2014, 2016b). And I think for me that is how the legacy of Stanley's antiracist educational work is inflected within my research and scholarship. It has shown me a way of understanding, documenting, and describing; a way of thinking through and attempting to respond to racism in the world. It is a call to reflection in action in antiracism work. And so... the refrain continues.



## Building Connections: My Humble Reply

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Timothy J. Stanley

I am truly honoured that Nicholas Ng-A-Fook, my close friend and colleague, decided to initiate this volume. As he does in so much of his other work, he brings together here a combination of new and established scholars, not least of whom is his co-editor and my former PhD student Mark Currie. I cannot thank Nicholas and Mark enough for this initiative. The other contributors to this book have deeply moved and even humbled me with the generous things that they say about my life work and its effects on their own understandings and projects. I thank you all from the bottom of my heart.

As my colleague Sharon Cook once told me, teaching is always a hope-filled activity; you never really know the results of your teaching. It is thus a rare privilege to be shown some of these results. Teaching has shaped everything I have done professionally, not only my actual teaching and mentoring of students, but also my research and even my approach to university administration. Teaching is central to my analysis of racisms and antiracism, and to my critique of nationalist histories and their grand narratives. The way racisms structure social relations teach those who benefit from their exclusions that racism is natural, just the way the world is, its consequences invisible. The same structure can teach those who are excluded that racism is inevitable, its consequences to be endured. Since antiracism, like racism, does not come naturally, we need to teach people that the effects of racisms are not unique to them, but are widespread. We also need to teach

people how to overcome racism once they do see it. Eurocentric grand narratives silence the reality of settler colonialism and the histories of racist exclusion that have made this place, while teaching people that only those with certain kinds of bodies are truly “Canadian.” This teaching is reinforced and naturalized by the artificial cultural landscapes in which we are immersed—their material constructions and symbolic overlays—that teach that certain people belong, and others do not (Stanley, 2009, 2024a, 2024b). Meanwhile the affect that we feel in our bodies as we move through those landscapes teaches us where we belong and where we do not. But as the many contributions to this volume show, the fight against racism and for social justice is multifaceted and ongoing. They give me hope for the future of the world.

Bryan Smith applies my theorizations to Australia to understand “both how to operationalize place-naming as a critical pedagogical tool of antiracism and decolonizing work, and further tease out how racial formations use everyday backdrops as a mechanism to normalize white place.” Building on the highly developed Indigenous scholarship of Australia, he engages with the social construction of landscapes and memory, what Aileen Moreton-Robinson (2015) calls “the white possessive,” to look at how naming practices make home the place “where exclusions happen.” In so doing, he finds continuities between the settler colonial and racist state formations of Canada and Australia (as indeed does Moreton-Robinson), both the products of British settler colonialism. At the same time my work on “the specificities of contexts of racism” speaks through his “continued understandings and adaptation to unfamiliar contexts of racialization, exclusions, and their varied consequences.” As Bryan notes: Context matters, theory cannot be mechanically applied to all times and places, but rather it helps to identify procedures that can allow us to understand the formations and antiracist possibilities of specific contexts.

Farah Virani-Murji engages with “A Letter to My Children” (Stanley, 1999) to write a letter to Maleeka, one of her research participants. Speaking to Maleeka, she reflects on her own “struggle to navigate the territory of inequality and discrimination with you as you and your peers shared your experiences of being excluded, bullied, and not always comfortable with how it felt to be ‘brown.’” What Farah is doing here, as I do myself in “Letter,” is to put herself into the knowledge-creation process, not just as a researcher but as someone who is herself living the realities of racism and exclusion. “A Letter to My Children” originated when Judith Robertson asked

me to contribute to her volume of antiracist approaches to primary education. When I was having difficulty thinking of what to write, she suggested that I write it as a letter to my two young daughters. In one week, the letter almost wrote itself and the incident I describe is one that both my now adult daughters remember. The letter is about my struggle to find words that teach without paralyzing those being taught. And as Farah is showing here, this is something that all researchers who are seeking to build transformative educational projects need to engage with, whether we put it up front in our writing or not. To write up research is to teach, to teach is to put yourself into the world. Teaching is at times fraught, often not safe, but is always seeking to build connections and to “spark conversations that are little less lonely.”

When Samantha Cutrara contacted me to participate in her pandemic pedagogy series, I thought I would have nothing to say. At the time, I was thinking through what Ghassan Hage (2016) calls “the failure of antiracism.” Antiracists have been focusing on the wrong things, looking for better rhetorical strategies to show racists the error of their ways and to get them to stop being racist, at the same time as the racists have been growing stronger by mobilizing the full range of human experience, including the affect of those who fear they are losing their world. Where 30 years ago, there was a strong non-partisan consensus that racism was wrong, today right-wing populist authoritarians around the world are using explicitly racist tropes to gain power. As Samantha allowed me to explain, we therefore need to develop a pedagogy of connection, one that uses historical knowledge to show people how they are connected in material, symbolic, and embodied ways across seemingly vast cultural, national, and racial differences, so that the space for racism does not arise in the first place. According to Samantha, this project runs through my entire corpus with even my historical work connecting people across time and distance. As Samantha reminds us, historical knowledge and understanding allows us to reach across time, place, and distance to build connections so that “when doing so, we can engage in greater forms of justice.”

Joseph Smith builds on his deep involvement in community organizing to engage with my conceptualization of the multiple meanings of history. I am truly delighted by this. My understanding of racism grew out of my own involvement in community organizing, first in 1979 to 1980 as a member of the Ad Hoc Committee Against W5 of

the Chinese Benevolent Association of Vancouver (see Chan, 1983), and then as a founding member and activist in the BC Organization to Fight Racism (BCOFR). For five years, BCOFR is what I did. We found that a wave of racist attacks against Indo-Canadians had left people living in terror alongside neighbours who had no idea that the attacks were even happening (Gill, 1982). We also organized a coalition that stopped an organizing drive of David Duke's Ku Klux Klan and forced a right-wing Social Credit government to enact the first explicitly anti-racist legislation in BC's history. Along the way, we found allies and resistances in unexpected places. Like Joseph, I too have witnessed first-hand "the multifarious psycho-social and socio-political implications of race, racialization and racism on the quality of life of all those who call North America home." I too have seen those in the dominant positions "feign ignorance at the thought that the systems they uphold actively contribute to the systemic discrimination of many." Joseph finds that people on both ends of this spectrum are unaware of their relations to others and to territories, and are instead immersed in "neatly crafted myths reverberating across time and place [...] posing as 'truths' about external reality." This results in what he calls "a mis-relationship between present and past" that leads Black people "to relive their trauma" while also fostering "white fragility." Yet, Joseph is not without hope: "The dual nature of our history, that fact that it is at once real and imagined, offers us the ability to acknowledge the strength and understanding that although John A. Macdonald was a white supremacist our Confederation does not have to be."

Mark Currie engages with my anti-essentialist stance, the place where I end up whenever push comes to shove. He notes, "The anti-essentialist position seeks to problematize notions of essentializing socially constructed meanings as natural boundaries that place people in structured societies where racisms became banal. [...] There is nothing natural or inherent about the borders we live within, the everyday spaces we occupy, or even the identities we embrace and ascribe." He then foregrounds human activity as creating the racist systems of exclusions: "These systems were and are created by people. The streets did not name themselves. The school curriculum did not write itself. The buildings did not spring up from the earth like a tree. Even the placement of many actual trees resulted from the decisions made by people." As such he is engaging with the central issues of anti-racism. The categories that we use to describe the world, the terms through which we identify people, including racializations, ethnicity,

nationality, are all human inventions particular to time and place. Human beings do not live in either/or binaries, they live across and between them. Indeed, as Stuart Hall noted in Hall and Jally (2002), the meanings that are attached to particular cultural representations slip as people remake them for their own purposes. Over time, racialized categories also slip as people remake them and live between and across them. As Hall notes, meanings slip until power intervenes to refix them. As someone who is “mixed race,” half WASP and half Chinese, I have long known that no system of racial classification actually describes people on the ground, but it is power that refixes them into either/or binaries. Consequently, as Leslie Roman and I first argued, it is racism that makes race, not race that makes racism (Roman & Stanley, 1997). Racism is being reasserted today in Canada and the United States precisely because the old categories have started to slip and need to be reimposed (or reinvented) to maintain the dominance of those who benefit from exclusion. As Mark notes, oppressed groups need to come together using strategic essentialism to end their oppression, but we still always need to always be open to complexity. Consequently, antiracism will long remain an unfinished project. This is indeed “something to think about.”

Shannon Conway opens a look into how my research is affecting a new generation of Canadian historians. Like me, she is trying to “kill” Canadian history, which has been “told from a British Anglo-Protestant-Canadian point of view” and that “reproduces a singular interpretation.” According to Conway, my critique helped to create the space that allowed her to critically engage with Canadian identities without falling into the trap of reproducing “a grand narrative [...] linked to the creation of a shared public memory, which in turn makes the ‘imagined community,’ the very settler colonial nation itself” and that “plays a significant role in the understanding of what it is to be ‘Canadian’ and who counts as ‘Canadians.’” Agreeing that adding another chapter onto the grand narrative creates token inclusion without addressing the basis of exclusion itself, she notes Newfoundland tends to be added on as an afterthought, its identities forcefully subsumed into dominant Canadian tropes. As Conway notes, “While my work does not directly lend itself to antiracist historical accounts, it does directly challenge the homogenous imageries and understandings of Canada’s past, its identities, and its peoples.” As such, she too is opening up spaces for multiple ways of being, multiple histories that are killing Canadian history premised on an imposed fiction of

a shared past and that create new and better possibilities for creating connections between people.

Lindsay Gibson's contribution illustrates the fact that we never see the long-term effects of our teaching, including that of our published research. I had no idea that I have not only shaped his "understanding of Canadian history, the history of racism, and the aims, purposes, and methods of history education," but I embody the type of scholar and person he aims to be. Gibson describes in detail my critique of nationalist grand narratives and a presentation that I did to the 2017 Historical Thinking Summer Institute (HTSI) that he organized at the Canadian Museum of History. Ironically it is precisely because of this critique that I ended up on the General Advisory Committee for the new Canada Hall (Stanley, 2000, 2006). The other members of the committee were all distinguished historians: Marcel Caya, Lyle Dick, Brenda Macdougall, Nicole Neatby, Ruth Phillips, Charlotte Gray, and Jack Granatstein. We advised the exhibition's key personnel from the inception of the project to its grand opening. We commented on the Hall's overall conception and organization, all the text, and often the specific exhibits and themes for each section. Interestingly, when touring the completed project a few days before the opening, Michael Bliss, who was on the museum's board of directors, told me that he was responsible for getting both Jack and me on the committee. He figured that if we slugged things out on the committee, the results would avoid major controversy. In fact, Jack was not able to participate in all our meetings and when he did, I often found myself agreeing with his comments. However, I am less certain he would agree that my interventions were "critical, provocative, fair-minded, and inspiring." But Gibson reminds us that it is not enough for critical scholars to develop "correct" analyses. We need to be able to convince people that we are right and that there are other ways of doing things. The more critical your position, the more generous you need to be with the people you are critiquing.

Noorin Nazari wrote her contribution to this volume when she was the last PhD student whom I agreed to supervise. At the time, she was just beginning her research on how the history and social studies textbooks of the Republic of Afghanistan were inventing the imagined community of the nation. Like so many students in education, she came to historical research and text-based critical discourse analysis late in her career. Her background was in comparative and international education, and she was hoping to do an ethnographic

study in Afghanistan (something that the University of Ottawa's Risk Management policy would not have allowed). Nazari was born in Afghanistan and was studying medicine at Kabul University when her family was forced to leave when the Taliban first took over. In the intervening years, she has worked on various development projects relating to Afghan education. As she was writing her thesis, she also had to deal with the Taliban's second takeover of Afghanistan and its consequences for her friends and family there. She came to me because textbooks had been the subject of one of my first publications (Stanley, 1990). Textbooks were central to my own doctoral research and analysis of racism ever since. I looked at textbooks because I was interested in a quick and readily accessible set of historical sources on popular racism. In the UBC Historical Textbook Collection, I found not the occasional prejudicial remark about the Chinese, but rather the organization of the world according to an ideology (Arendt, 1951/1973). The textbooks enacted white supremacist dominance, making it central to the imagined community of Canada and the British Empire. They not only excluded Indigenous Peoples and Asians but taught young people that Asians, Africans, and Indigenous Peoples were morally different Others who did not belong in Canada. As Nazari notes, "misrepresentation and absence make one side of the equation of inequality, but the impact of misrepresentation and absence of peoples is the other." Nazari learned how to develop her own analysis of how textbooks construct the imagined community of Afghanistan without falling into the trap of assuming that its curriculum works in the same ways as in Canada, as she writes, "Knowledge is both transferable and applicable while it changes its specificities to accommodate the contextual realities of the new scenario in which knowledge is employed." Meanwhile her work engaged one of the central challenges of education and hence of teaching. Everything that teachers do depends on context. What we teach, the materials we have to teach, the challenges we face, all change with time and place and circumstances. Formal education is inevitably central to the forming of nation-states: "Modern nation-states attempt to gain their legitimacy through establishing a strong and cohesive society with the assumption that this can be acquired through homogenization of different peoples, languages, cultures, and experiences." States bring young people into our classrooms, yet the human challenge of teaching remains the same: how to engage with each child's uniqueness so as to teach them that they can lead better lives. As Nazari found, this

requires deconstructing the “truths” of textbooks to connect with the real truths of people’s lives, something that she ultimately did brilliantly in her thesis (Nazari, 2024).

I had no idea that I have had such an influence on Kent den Heyer or his own teaching. Kent, a scholar whose work I truly admire, finds parallels between my work on grand narratives and racism, and Roger Simon’s work on the ethics of remembrance, a truly humbling comparison. He finds a shared ethical stance as the common thread between our work, even though we come into history education from very different places. After having them read my critique of the grand narrative, den Heyer prompts his students to engage with these ethics by asking them to create an alternative narrative of Canadian history. Encouragingly they are finding that the solution is not to replace nationalist grand narratives with another one based on a single group’s perspective. As one student notes, “All groups of people are complex and have complexities,” while still another notes, “Capturing only the most important aspects of a situation based on a single group’s perspectives seemed almost impossible; realistically I am not doing the event any kind of justice.” These statements affirm den Heyer’s reflection about the centrality of ethical engagement to the development of historical understanding and indeed in seeking to represent the past. As den Heyer shows, ethical engagement to represent the past in ways that are not only accurate, but transformative, is central to the work of all history educators.

I have been deeply privileged by the quality of thesis students who have chosen (for some strange reasons) to work with me. Among the contributors to this volume they include Mark Currie, Nichole Grant, Noorin Nazari, Pamela Rogers, Doug Tateishi, and Bryan Smith. So much of my work of supervision has been about enabling candidates to find their own voices, and as their contributions here show, they are powerful and independent voices. As Doug Tateishi notes, this has not always been easy even for those who come in with incredible professional experience in education. In Tateishi’s case, he was not only a talented kindergarten teacher and then a board-level race relations consultant, but he is also a former school principal, superintendent, and school board deputy director of education, as well as a field representative of the Ontario Ministry of Education and the provincial lead on its equity and inclusion strategy. Ironically, the challenge in his case was not only to get him to overcome his “bureaucratic” writing style, but even more importantly to have the

confidence to synthesize and build on his considerable knowledge of how classrooms, schools, school districts, and even the Ministry of Education, work in practice. And contrary to what Tateishi says here, I did suggest that to save time he make use of my framework for analyzing racism and antiracism (Stanley 2011, 2014), but it appears he did not hear me. Most importantly, however, I did not impose on him the idea that he had to use it. Rather, I let him flounder his way back to adapting it for his own purposes. In the end, Tateishi came to the realization that the 1993 antiracism strategy of the Government of Ontario would have failed, and indeed the 2009 equity and inclusion initiative and other equity strategies will also fail, because they do not take into account the culture of professional practice in schools (Tateishi, 2020). The only people who have credibility with teachers and who can show them the way forward are other teachers. Similarly, the only people with credibility with principals are other principals, with superintendents are other superintendents, with school trustees and directors of education are other school trustees and directors of education. This is a hugely important insight into what needs to happen to make institutional antiracism change. It cannot happen from the top down using outside consultants. We need to equip people to intervene with their peers who are at the same level in the organization and do so by mobilizing those who have the greatest respect from their colleagues because of their profound practical understanding of how things work at that level because they do it every day. Otherwise, antiracism will indeed fail. Tateishi talks at some length about how supportive I was of him, but I am blessed to have been able to help him bring his knowledge into the world.

My partner Frances says she married me because I cry at movies. Well, I guess I do not only cry at movies; I have cried every time that I have read Ken Montgomery's contribution here as well as when I heard his original remarks at my retirement celebration. Montgomery is talking about the fundamental contract between teacher and student at every level. This contract is about opening up further possibilities for growth and understanding, not by imposing it on students through indoctrination but through inviting them to engage with the experiences and understandings of others. To invite them, as the British philosopher of education Michael Oakeshott (1971) wrote so many years ago, into a conversation that started with the first human beings who came down from the trees and that continues as part of our engagement to be human. My life work has been to show people how

racisms block, disrupt, and prevent this engagement, and to also show how antiracism can re-establish this conversation in all its diversity, to engage in the most exciting conversation of all, which is one that crosses difference to define common projects that can save our world. Montgomery was the very first thesis student who I recruited. What he does not share here is that after being trained as a physical education teacher and teaching in rural Alberta, he decided to go to Japan to teach English because he did not like the person he was becoming, in effect another Bobby Orr (full disclosure here, as an expat Montrealer who grew up with the idea that the only hockey team that counts is Les Canadiens, I was never an Orr fan, but sometimes we need to be charitable in our judgements of those less fortunate including Bruins fans from Nova Scotia like Ken). While in Japan, he learned Japanese, married a Japanese woman, came back to Canada to do an MEd in English as a second language teaching, and was three quarters of the way through when he made the mistake of taking my course. As he notes, I changed his life. He switched to the MA with thesis (taking an additional year to finish) and then did his PhD with me. Montgomery was the first advanced student who I was able to show how racialization works, something that, as he discusses here, he has built on in his own scholarship and teaching ever since. He is the one who encouraged me to organize my 2011 book around my theory of racisms and antiracism, which in fact I did (Stanley, 2011). If through our association I have shaped Montgomery's life, he has shaped mine as well. But as he points out here, my effects go beyond him to his students and indeed to their students. This in turn makes me reflect on my own teachers: my parents who showed me that racism is always a lie; Miss Sorg, my Grade 3 and 5 teacher who spoke out against someone saying something racist in her classroom so movingly that I remember what she said over sixty years later; Professor Ella Laffey whose Chinese intellectual history tutorial course with me while I was a second year undergraduate at McGill taught me to read for argument, to understand how historians use evidence, and how to think historiographically, something that most history students only encounter in grad school; Professor Paul Lin also of McGill who made it possible for me to go to China as a Canadian government exchange student from 1976 to 1978, an experience that changed my life; Charan Gill of BCOFR who showed me what true courage is, that to understand racism you need to engage with people who experience it directly, and that by bringing people together in common projects you can

end it; Ed Wickberg who supervised my master's thesis, who taught me about the pitfall of winner's history and that you must never lose faith in your students; J. Donald Wilson my PhD co-supervisor who read everything I wrote and provided detailed feedback within a day or two of submitting a chapter even when it was months late; and Vincent D'Oyley, my real supervisor, who created the space for me to work through my theorization of racism in my own way and who also introduced me to the cultural politics of the professorate, something that has guided me ever since. If I do not see all those who I have influenced, including the many people that Montgomery notes, others do not see the many people who have shaped me. The only reason that we do not sink into the mud is that we stand on the shoulders of those who came before us. Whatever we do builds on this. We need to honour this in everything that we do as scholars and teachers.

Some years ago, when I was the University of Ottawa's interim dean of the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies, the dean of the School of Graduate Studies of the University of Toronto asked me why I supervised graduate students. Coming from the research labs in medicine, he knew why he supervised students; they worked on his research, did the grunt work in his lab, conducted most of the actual research, and even wrote most of the articles that got his grants renewed. Why would you supervise someone who is not working on your research? I told him that I supervised PhD students because they made me a better scholar. Having read Pamela Rogers's reflection on the qualities that she sees in me as her mentor, I think I would answer differently. Citing Yamamoto (1988), what she calls the "mentoring processes of creation through another" has been one of my life's great pleasures. To see an advanced student find their voice and make their way forward to original contributions in the creation of knowledge is central to my own commitments as a scholar. As she rightly points out, being a graduate mentor should not be "an 'add-on' or additional burden to the mentor, but rather a process of recognition for the relationship to begin on a footing of understanding and respect." Rather than imposing things on the mentee, it "allows mentees to sculpt their future selves alongside, but not under, a careful and guiding eye." At all times it means being available, listening deeply to what the student is saying, and also at times telling them things that they do not want to hear. It is about listening for the things that they are not saying. Many a thesis student, including me when I was one, go through periods when they are hiding from their supervisor. When I sense this in my

students, I contact them to find out what is going on. Usually, they are stuck on something, and they need to talk it through. This is why the bring-it-to-me-when-its-finished approach to thesis supervision is always bad practice even when the student is a fully functioning autonomous adult: A five-minute conversation can often save weeks or even months and years of agony. The supervisor-student relationship, like all important human relationships, cannot be legislated even if we can identify best practices. What works with one student does not work with another. Every supervisory relationship is unique; like all important human relationships they can fail through no one's fault, simply because of a lack of fit, and when small problems of communication become big ones. The supervisory relationship is "not a simple or easy type of connection to cultivate." But to take on the supervision of a PhD student is to enter into one of the most significant relationships in that person's life and should never be done lightly. You need to be certain that that you are "able to see a person yet to be born' before they see the path on their own," and that you can guide them to that path. As Rogers reminds us, for the student "mentorship is about trust, and is a metaphor for placing one's professional life in the care of someone they do not yet know." And just as parents need to be careful about placing our children under the care of those who are careless as well as those who are dangerous, we need to be careful who we allow students to work with. As Rogers points out, all this is part of a larger process of not only helping others to become more fully human, but also of becoming more human yourself.

And so, we now come to Nichole Grant's contribution. While all the students who I have had the privilege of working with have engaged with my framework of racisms and antiracism, in some ways Grant has engaged with it the most closely. In part, this is because she worked with me as my theorization of the failure of antiracism was developing, leading her to look at the material relations that structure racisms and the concomitant failure of the antiracists to seriously engage with this (Grant, 2022). This structure enters into our lives through the affect that we feel as we either engage in racist practices, confront antiracist ones, or live through racist oppression. Our bodies know the world in ways that our systems of representation cannot, something that post-humanist feminist scholars like Donna Haraway, Nirmal Puwar, and Sarah Ahmed have long known. Nichole may indeed be right; in the end my greatest contribution may be to ask "And so?" I am reminded of Karl Marx's (1845) eleventh thesis on

Feuerbach: "Philosophers have hitherto only interpreted the world in various ways; the point is to change it." It is not enough to make pretty arguments, however pleasing this may be to us. The point of critical scholarship is to change the world for the better. Hence my many "And sos?" As Grant points out, it is not just a calling of grad students to attention, it is "a call to action *in* this world; a question of provoking continual antiracist response. It is also a connection to the not yet known, to the continual project of antiracism."

This "And so?" runs throughout my life's work. It begins when I first learned to confront the reality of racism, which led to the "And so?" of how we can overcome it. It continued with the "And so?" of my doctoral research when I sought to develop an analysis of how racism works historically, not to make known things about a now-forgotten past, but to understand how racism works, how it begins, how it is perpetuated, how it has changed as it has been resisted. It continued with my teaching, trying to share with others what I had learned and helping them to ask "And so, now that we know about it, what can we do about it?"

"And so" we face a time of unprecedented challenges. Nuclear Armageddon, global warming, social media tribalism, and the decline of democratic community, all threaten the future of our planet, of our civilization, and even the lives of everyone we know and love. Yet, racism is still more important because it conditions our responses to all the other challenges.

Racism does not just fall from the sky. It is not the natural result of human differences. It is not the inevitable product of human nature. It is not naturally occurring prejudices or negative attitudes. No one is born a racist. It is something that people learn, which means that it something that people are taught. It is something that people do, make, and remake. People build the racist walls that separate people. People make these walls seem natural, obvious, in no need of explanation. People exclude the bodies, knowledge, and life experiences of those on the other side of the wall. People make those they place on the other side of the wall into the "they/them" who threaten "we/us," who stop "us" from living the way "we" want, and who are the reason why "we" need strong leaders to protect "us." It is people who make the exclusion of "they/them" complete, so "their" needs, "their" hopes and dreams, and "their" very lives do not count.

Yet, no walls are high enough to block radioactive fallout and nuclear winter. No walls are strong enough to stop the rising oceans.

No walls are wide enough to end the forced migration of the hundreds of millions of men, women, and children escaping places that are flooded, have become infertile, or are too hot for human beings to live in. No walls can break through the social media algorithms that reduce the world to our own mirror image.

I do not know how to defuse the bombs, stop global warming, or rebuild communities, let alone how to end the rise of right-wing authoritarianism and ultranationalism. But I do know that no one, no matter how powerful, can end these things on their own. The only way of overcoming these challenges is to pull down the human-made walls that separate us from each other and to come together in shared projects. Only then can we mobilize the knowledge and wisdom of all the peoples of the world to address the challenges of our times.

Racism prevents this coming together. So, whatever else we do, we need to fight racism and we need to win. To win, we need to know who and what is racist, what racism is, how it works, and what to do about it. We need to find ways of limiting the consequences of racist exclusion and healing its damages. We need to not only stop the racism, but also to make racism impossible so that it never again threatens our future. Our future and that of our children and grandchildren depends on it.

But antiracism is also a personal journey, of learning deeply how the world works, of finding ways of building connections that cross seemingly unbridgeable differences, and of discovering more and more deeply what it is to be human. Of learning to listen to the affect that we feel, because it is telling us the most important truths when things are not right in the world. All this is necessarily a teaching/learning journey. It is not so much that we have to teach people that they are racist as it is that we have to teach them how to reconnect to others so that the space for racism does not arise in the first place. We cannot do any of this if we are alone and isolated. And so, we need to find allies. We need to learn from others that there is hope even in the darkest of times. As the contributors to this volume show, we need to learn to build on the work and insights of those who have come before as we make our own always unfinished journeys.

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# Contributors

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**Shannon Conway** received her PhD in history from the University of Ottawa in 2020 and is a research associate with the Gorsebrook Research Institute for Atlantic Canadian Studies at Saint Mary's University (2021–2026), a research consultant, and a federal public servant. Her doctoral thesis examined constructions of Canadian and Newfoundland identities since 1949. Her research interests include identity(ies), nationalism(s), regionalism, Canadiana, and post-Confederation Newfoundland, and her interdisciplinary background in history, philosophy, political science, policy studies, and anthropology heavily influence her research. Conway's current research is on perceptions of Newfoundland culture, identity, and nationalism in Newfoundland children's literature from 1990 to 2015 and post-cod moratorium Newfoundland culture and identity more generally. Conway is from outport Newfoundland.

**Mark T. S. Currie** was a SSHRC-funded post-doctoral fellow (2022–2024) and is now an Adjunct Professor with the School SSHRC-funded post-doctoral fellow at the School of Indigenous and Canadian Studies at Carleton University. His post-doctoral research focuses on small-town communities in Southern Ontario, investigating whether community members remember or see racism occurring in the town; if they see their town as an antiracist community; and how whiteness is maintained or disrupted in the memories and perceptions of the town.

This post-doctoral research builds on his PhD in education, which focused on socio-historical geographies and enacting antiracisms in downtown Toronto. Currie holds a master's degree in island studies from the University of Prince Edward Island, for which he investigated post-colonial education and cultural identity on the Caribbean island of Dominica. He also gained a master's degree in teaching from Griffith University, for which he conducted action research on in-class student motivation in a secondary school in Cape Town, South Africa.

**Samantha Cutrara** is a history education strategist based in Toronto. She developed the *Pandemic Pedagogy* video series in 2020 and became the principal storytelling officer for the Canadian Heritage funded project *Histoire Source | Source Story* in 2021. Cutrara also provides innovative program and curriculum development support through the office of the vice provost academic at York University. Her first book *Transforming the Canadian History Classroom: Imagining a New "We"* was published in 2020.

**Kent den Heyer** works the lonely street corner of history and social studies education, curriculum theory, educational philosophy, and that of the educational implications of Alain Badiou's anti-philosophy. Committed to psychoanalytical approaches to antiracist education, his scholarship appears in international journals, handbooks, and in Canada's nationally distributed newspapers. While being the first PhD student in UBC's Centre for the Study of Historical Consciousness studying collective memory, history education, and social psychology, he also worked for the Public Knowledge Project investigating the public value of academic research. He has taught a range of subjects and grades in Canada, Japan, Taiwan, and Colombia along with prospective social studies teachers in Canada and the United States. He currently professes in the former department of secondary education, University of Alberta, and, in 2005, was inducted as a team member into Nova Scotia's Sports Hall of Fame.

**Lindsay Gibson** is an assistant professor in the Department of Curriculum and Pedagogy at the University of British Columbia. He has published journal articles, book chapters, and books about historical thinking, historical inquiry, history teacher education, the ethical dimension of history, and assessment of historical thinking. He is the teaching and learning cluster co-lead of the *Thinking Historically for*

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**Nichole E. Grant** currently resides with her family in Ottawa, Ontario, the traditional unceded territories of the Anishinaabe Algonquin Peoples. She is the researcher and policy analyst at the Canadian Teachers' Federation and part-time professor with the University of Ottawa in the Faculty of Education. Having published in several edited collections, the *Canadian Journal of Education*, and *Historical Encounters*, Grant's research focuses on anti-oppressive practices and educational policies in Canada, as well as methods of knowledge formation in material and everyday spaces. In her work, Grant looks to understand the interactions of people, places, and histories in these areas through feminist posthumanism, decolonizing, and new materialist approaches.

**Ken Montgomery** is dean of the Faculty of Education at the University of Windsor. He served previously as the associate dean, research and graduate programs, in the Faculty of Education at the University of Regina and as the inaugural director of the Saskatchewan Justice Institute at the University of Regina. He has also taught at the University of Ottawa, Wilfrid Laurier University, and in the public school systems of Alberta and Japan. Montgomery's research focus is on the close articulation of nationalism and racism within diverse educational contexts. His work has been published in academic journals such as *Discourse*, *Paedagogica Historica*, and *Critical Education*. He has also published work as a co-investigator on a SSHRC-funded project pertaining to digital storytelling and treaty education. He serves on the editorial boards of "Power & Education" (Sage) and "Race Ethnicity and Education" (Routledge/Taylor & Francis).

**Noorin Nazari** is a PhD candidate in the Faculty of Education at the University of Ottawa. Nazari's doctoral work, supervised by Stanley, is based on textual and intertextual analysis of textbooks and their

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**Nicholas Ng-A-Fook** is a professor and former vice-dean of graduate studies in the Faculty of Education at the University of Ottawa. He continues to address the 94 Calls to Action put forth by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in partnership with Survivors from the Algonquin First Nations communities. His teaching and research are situated within the wider international field of curriculum studies. As a curriculum theorist, he draws on different life writing research methodologies—autobiography, ethnography, oral history, and narrative inquiry—to co-create, co-support, and co-sustain culturally responsive, relevant, and relational curriculum with school leaders and teachers seeking to serve the public good. He is the host of the *FooknConversation* podcast.

**Pamela Rogers** is the director of research and professional learning at the Canadian Teachers' Federation (CTF/FCE), and adjunct professor in the Faculty of Education at the University of Ottawa. Her research focuses on discursive policy formations and teachers' lived experiences in neo-liberal educational governance structures. She has publications in the *Canadian Journal of Education*, *Critical Literacy: Theories and Practices*, and *Historical Encounters*, focusing on anti-oppressive education, critical historical consciousness, and understanding cultural productions of history in public spaces. Rogers is a public academic who has written articles for the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives journal, *Our Schools/Our Selves*, the New Brunswick Media Co-op, and CTF/FCE's online blog *Perspectives*. As a former high school social studies teacher from Nova Scotia, she is interested in improving workplace conditions and building community alliances to support public school educators.

**Bryan Smith** is a lecturer in humanities and social sciences education at James Cook University. His work explores critical approaches to

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**Joseph Smith’s** doctorate is in the humanities and encompasses key notions amongst the disciplines of philosophy, psychology, religious studies, and literature, with a focus on the philosophies of self-consciousness within the West and the intellectual background of Black consciousness. He is a qualified elementary, secondary, and post-secondary educator and is currently a vice principal. He is also a co-founder of the non-profit organization Generation Chosen, which seeks to interrupt intergenerational cycles of trauma and poverty. Prior to these endeavours, he was a project coordinator for the Black Experience Project, housed in and funded by Environics Research Institute. In addition to his ongoing academic work, he runs the boutique consultancy agency Anchoring Minds, which focuses on the development of strategic plans geared towards shifting corporate culture in progressive and innovative ways. Last but by no means least, he is a founding member of the Foundation for Black Communities, which is a philanthropic organization designed to adjudicate grants, develop policy, and liaise with government and the philanthropic sector to serve Black-led and Black-serving non-profits and charities.

**Doug Tateishi** is a Sansei (third generation) Japanese-Canadian student and educator. His research interests include antiracist education, curriculum theory, and educational leadership. His research focuses on his 60-plus years of experience confronting and addressing racism and exclusions in schools and school systems. His writing draws upon the 45 years that he worked in four Ontario school

boards and at the Ontario Ministry of Education. He was a teacher, administrator, antiracist consultant, and supervisory officer for school boards. Subsequently, while working for the Ministry of Education he participated in developing the provincial Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy and later in facilitating its implementation in all Ontario school boards. His doctoral thesis entitled, "What Happened to Antiracist Education?" describes how provincial educational policy and its attendant supports and pressures should be constructed to best identify and eliminate racism in Ontario schools.

**Farah Virani-Murji** has a PhD in education (language, culture, and teaching) from York University in Toronto. She has taught in classrooms of all ages for over thirteen years and has extensive experience in instructional design and online learning. Her scholarly interests include adolescent identity, antiracism studies, decolonization, teacher education, and life history methodology.

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**“The essays in this collection offer critical insights into Timothy J. Stanley’s impactful antiracism and social justice work, reminding us of what might be achieved when we embark on ‘a personal journey’ of antiracism, toward the equitable and just society and world we seek.”**

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