“Born-Again Racism”:
Understanding Racism in a ‘post-racial’ Canada

Shelina Kassam
March 21, 2018
LET’S TALK ABOUT RACISM
REMEMBER SHARPEVILLE

21 March 1960
69 killed
180 wounded
TODAY I'M ASKING MY FELLOW TEACHERS THE QUESTION: "DOES RACE MATTER?"
"Race is not something rooted in nature, something that reflects clear and discrete variations in human identity. But race is also not an illusion. While it may not be ‘real’ in a biological sense, race is indeed real as a social category with definite social consequences.”

Omi and Winant, 2015
“Everybody learns some combination, some version of the rules of racial classification, and of their own racial identity, often without obvious teaching or conscious inculcation. Thus are we inserted into a comprehensively racialized social structure. Race becomes ‘common-sense’ – a way of comprehending, explaining and acting in the world.”

Omi and Winant, 2015
“…Race refuses to remain silent because it isn’t just a word. It is a set of conditions, shifting over time. Never just one thing, it is a way (or really ways) of thinking, a way(s) of living, a disposition.”

Goldberg, 2006
“Born-again racism is a racism without race, racism gone private, racism without the categories to name it as such. It is racism shorn of the charge, a racism that cannot be named because nothing abounds with which to name it. It is a racism purged of its historical roots, of its groundedness, a racism whose history is lost.”

Goldberg, 2009
“Unequal access to unequal resources and possibilities from positions of unequal preparation and power ultimately entails a third-class ticket to nowhere.”

Goldberg, 2009
Silencing the language of race

Erasure of the language of race has important implications:

1. Silences conversation about racism
2. Amounts to a denial of impact of racism
3. Allows racism to flourish while being denied
A CONCISE HISTORY OF BLACK-WHITE RELATIONS IN THE U.S.A.
Racism’s domains

Useful to think of racism in four overlapping domains:

1. Acts of overt prejudice, discrimination and hate
2. Polite or subtle racism
3. Apocalyptic events
4. Systemic discrimination
“...for an act to be considered racist it would appear that it must be provable that the victim did nothing nor possessed any attribute other than a dark(er) skin colour. As soon as the victim can be found to follow practices or have other characteristics that set him/her apart from the society in which he/she lives, any negative reaction he or she is met with may be considered something other than racist.”

Lentin, 2012
“What are you complaining about? We have to run the same distance as you, so it’s equal!” – @EmanuG
If you don’t have to think about it, it’s a privilege.
E.B. Benjamin & Beryl Bain
Graffiti in Calgary

SYrians Go home
and Die
Quebec City Mosque Shooting
Jewish Community Centres
Noor Fadal and Jake Taylor
Mari Zambrano and Sergio Estepa
Hate Crimes, Canada
By motivation and number

Source: Statistics Canada
Hate Crimes, Canada
By motivation and percentage

Source: Statistics Canada
Authority figures and religious symbols: Canadians discomfort

Source: EKOS Survey on Islamophobia in Canada, 2018
Family marriage to others: Canadian discomfort

Overall - different religious tradition: 12%  
Prospective Sikh in-law: 21%  
Prospective Muslim in-law: 31%

Source: EKOS Survey on Islamophobia in Canada, 2018
Brian Sinclair
Colten Boushie
Incarcerated Muslim men
Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women

Justice for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women
Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women
The System was never broken. It was built this way.
Racialized poverty

2006: 1.1 million racialized persons living in poverty in Canada:

- 4% of the total population
- 22% of all racialized persons
- 32% of all persons living in poverty

Source: Statistics Canada
Income
Racialized men/women and non-racialized men

Source: Williams, Macleans' Magazine, March 2018
Canadians and poverty levels
Racialized versus non-racialized

Source: Statistics Canada
## Poverty and Levels of Education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Non-racialized</th>
<th>Racialized</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than high school</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University certificate or degree</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Statistics Canada
Some steps forward

1. Listen to people
2. Challenge the status quo
The most dangerous phrase in the language is "we've always done it this way."
Some steps forward

1. Listen to people
2. Challenge the status quo
3. Support marginalized voices but remember ‘it’s not about you’
4. Educate yourself
5. Check your privilege
6. Build alliances
7. Remember the distinction between equity and equality
FOR A FAIR SELECTION EVERYBODY HAS TO TAKE THE SAME EXAM: PLEASE CLIMB THAT TREE
Some steps forward

1. Listen to people
2. Challenge the status quo
3. Support marginalized voices but remember ‘it’s not about you’
4. Educate yourself
5. Check your privilege
6. Build alliances
7. Remember the distinction between equity and equality
8. Hold yourself (and your organization) accountable
9. Do not lose hope
“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed people can change the world…. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.”

Margaret Mead
“May your choices reflect your hopes, not your fears.”

Nelson Mandela