

RACIALIZATION + THE FORCES BEHIND IT

a factsheet by Helena J.

In "Introduction: Questioning the Existence of the World," one main concept that Timothy Stanley discusses is racialization. This factsheet will explain what racialization is, how it is produced, how racialized exclusion occurs, and how power is behind it all

Racism is the outcome of human action:

- 1) Racialization (the social process of projecting arbitrary meanings onto bodies).
- 2) Racializations are organized into exclusions
- 3) The racialized exclusions enact significant negative consequences for the ones racialized and excluded

WHAT IS RACIALIZATION?

Racialization is the term for the social process of assigning meaning onto bodies, it is not natural or biological. It gives meaning to 'socially imagined difference' and the organized exclusion that occurs has negative consequences for those that are racialized.

Racialization involves 3 things which are historically produced, invented and popularized over time:

- patterns of cultural representation (stories told)
- knowledge production (books, news, textbooks)
- social organization (who gets to live where - where the 'ghettos' are, where the privileged are)

IT TAKES POWER TO ORGANIZE EXCLUSIONS

HOW IS IT DONE?

Organizations of exclusion can take many forms:

- Material exclusions (space, territories, institutions)
- Wealth, services, social institutions
- From life itself
- Networks, institutions, political rights (exclusion from the right to vote)
- Symbolic representation (exclusion from being represented in a certain way)
- Self presentation ignored, not taken seriously

WHO DOES IT?

Organized exclusion is done by multiple individuals and their efforts:

- Government, institutions
- Rituals, language, knowledge, political arrangements
- Ways of being

It is through these that racialized exclusion appears to be moral, normal, correct.

IMPORTANT NOTE ON RACIALIZED EXCLUSION:

Racializations are always relational: one group is always racialized in relation to another group. What this means, is that in order for somebody to be excluded, there must be somebody included. In order for somebody to be oppressed, somebody must be privileged. In order for somebody to be exploited, somebody must be profiting. There is no exclusion without inclusion. There is no oppression without privilege. There is no exploitation without profit.

IT IS NOT 'NATURAL'

It is important to look at both sides of the relation: the privileged, the included, those profiting. These racializations are often seen as natural or 'the way it has always been' however, it is important to show that racialization and resulting racism from exclusion is a consequence of human action, and every idea comes from a person. This side is often ignored, and the focus is often shifted onto the racialized group, making it seem as though they are the 'problem'; also known as a 'damage-centered' approach.

The oppressor is the problem.

SEGREGATION IN VICTORIA, BC

An example of how racialization and organized exclusions play out, is when Stanley discusses the segregation of students in Victoria, BC on September 5, 1922. White parents saw certain students as 'aliens', even though these students either had long roots in Victoria, were born in Britain, were 2nd or 3rd generation Canadians themselves. The only commonality amongst these students was the fact that they were all racialized as being 'Chinese' and segregated by imagined difference. They were faced with the challenges of being separated, however they held a "resistance" strike which continued throughout the year in protest of this organized exclusion.

WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

Stanley's work and knowing what racialization is and how racialized exclusion occurs is important because it deconstructs assumptions that it's 'natural', or that things have always been a certain way, when the act of racialization comes from human beings and is continually reproduced by human beings. We need to be able to put a name on who has done what to whom in order to assign responsibility to those who have done harm. It is most important to bring racialized groups' analysis of their own self representation, their stories, perspectives, understandings, their words forward at the same time.