Vol.7 No.1 (2024)

Journal of Applied Learning & Teaching

ISSN : **2591-801X**

Content Available at : **http://journals.sfu.ca/jalt/index.php/jalt/index**

'Failing well' in teaching about race, racism and white supremacy. An interview with Stephen Brookfield

Stephen D. Brookfield[A] [A] *Adjunct Professor at Teachers College, Columbia University (New York) and Emeritus Professor at the University of St. Thomas (Minneapolis-St. Paul)*

Jürgen Rudolph[B] [B] *Director of Research & Learning Innovation, Kaplan Higher Education Academy*

Shannon Tan[C] [C] *Research Executive, Kaplan Higher Education Academy*

Keywords

Black Lives Matter;
Critical Race Theory (CRT);
critical theory;
higher education;
intersectionality;
race;
racism;
teacher training;
white privilege;
white supremacy.

Correspondence

Jurgen.Rudolph@kaplan.com [B]

Article Info

Received 6 June 2023
Received in revised form 27 February 2024
Accepted 29 February 2024
Available online 11 March 2024

DOI: https://doi.org/10.37074/jalt.2024.7.1.23

Abstract

Since embarking on his educational journey in 1970, Professor Stephen Brookfield has worked across various international settings, including England, Canada, Australia, and the United States. His experience spans a diverse range of environments, from adult and community education to prestigious higher education institutions like Harvard University and Columbia University. Central to his mission is aiding adults in critically examining prevailing ideologies they have absorbed. To advance this goal, Professor Brookfield has authored, co-authored, or edited 21 books encompassing topics such as adult learning, teaching methodologies, critical thinking, discussion techniques, critical theory, and anti-racist teaching.

Expanding upon our previous dialogues with Stephen Brookfield in the *Journal of Applied Learning & Teaching* (Brookfield et al., 2019, 2022) and complementing the reviews of his recent publications (Rudolph, 2019, 2020, 2022; Waring, 2024), this interview delves deeper into the themes explored in our recent book on *Teaching well* (Brookfield et al., 2024). This extensive conversation significantly elaborates on Chapter 9 of the book (Brookfield et al., 2024) and investigates the intricate, emotionally charged, and political project of teaching about race.

In this expansive discussion, we explore Stephen Brookfield's personal evolution from harbouring racist beliefs in his youth to embracing and contributing to Critical Race Theory (CRT), a journey marked by a decade of introspection and scholarly exploration, culminating in several key publications (Sheared et al., 2010; Brookfield & Associates, 2018; Brookfield & Hess, 2021). The conversation illuminates fundamental concepts such as race, racism, and white supremacy, recontextualising racism as a systemic issue rather than an individual failing. Racism is depersonalised and an endemic system of exclusion. We discuss it in the context of an intersectional analysis that acknowledges the interconnectedness of various forms of oppression, including classism, sexism, and ableism. A significant focus is placed on racism within the higher education sector. Brookfield shares insights from his extensive experience in conducting antiracist workshops for students, faculty, and organisations. He challenges the notion of the 'good white people' and advocates for a continuous, imperfect journey towards antiracism, where 'failing well' can be regarded as a good outcome.

Racism and white supremacy during Stephen's childhood and youth

Jürgen Rudolph (JR): Teaching race is one of the most complex pedagogic projects, and doing it well requires us to shift our notions of what counts as success quite substantially. Teaching race is an emotional and political project. You wrote: "Because I'm used to seeing myself as un-raced, it took me a long time to realise the truth of an African American co-teacher's comment: 'to students of color everything is seen in racial terms'" (Brookfield, 2017, p. 139). White people appear to have a particular problem with racism, as whiteness "is still widely taken for granted and thus remains invisible" to them (Cunningham, 2010, p. xxvi). Being color-blind is, however, an illusion. In your article "Teaching our own racism" (Brookfield, 2014, p. 90), you discussed your beliefs and attitudes growing up as a white person: "Attitudes and beliefs I picked up in my childhood, adolescence, and young adulthood included Blacks were alternatively lazy, happy, or violent; Pakistanis and Indians were sexually irresponsible having large families; and Gypsies were thieves out to mark your house as an easy target". These kinds of prejudices and stereotypes all sound terribly familiar to me from my own upbringing.

When you were 17, you encountered what is called in critical race theory, a counter-story. You wrote:

> I was being beaten up by a gang of white youths (they were 'rockers', I was a 'mod') in an English town one Friday night. A black American serviceman from a nearby USAF [United States Air Force] base crossed the street and broke up the fight telling us 'everybody's got to be cool now'. In my memory, I was on the verge of falling to the floor as the GI [U.S. soldier] intervened to save me from potentially severe injury (Brookfield, 2017, pp. 214-215).

Did the incident lead to any changes in your own beliefs when it comes to race? Could you elaborate on how you experienced and learned racism and white supremacy during your childhood and youth?

Stephen Brookfield (SB): That event is easily recalled. It stayed with me for the rest of my life as a clear interruption of this dominant narrative that I learned growing up regarding the different stereotypes attached to different racial identities. Of course, under white supremacy, Whites are cast as the non-violent users of reason and logic and people of color. Specifically – with the anti-blackness part of white supremacy – Blacks are often cast as inherently volatile, unpredictable and with a propensity for violence. So, that whole equation was shattered by that particular event because if he hadn't intervened, I think I would have been hurt much more than I was, which was basically just bruises and cuts that needed to be dressed. There weren't any internal injuries or anything like that that I suffered. That has stayed with me.

It was one of my earliest encounters with race because, at the time, I lived in an English village close to a market town. The village was almost completely white, and the town was overwhelmingly that way. It was a very dramatic illustration to me that the ideas that I was learning around race were inaccurate. In terms of how I learned these instincts and impulses, behaviors, and actions, I learned it by a process of unconscious internalization – I didn't realize I was learning these things, which is the nature of white supremacy. I never saw anyone in authority who wasn't white. Those in authority were also overwhelmingly male. And the images that I had of people who were to be admired were, through media, in politics and even in sport – because I followed soccer, in particular – were overwhelmingly white, though there were alternatives to that: the Brazilian soccer team was often held up as the pinnacle of the beautiful game. But mostly, my daily life was just soaked in this whiteness.

> ***Mostly, my daily life was just soaked in this whiteness.***

So, that's how I grew up. I assumed that leaders, in particular, were white, and those that we looked up to were white. The people who exercised power and authority in schools, religion and definitely in politics, and those who were known as successful in business were all white. So, I think that was something that soaked into me at a very unconscious level. I really wasn't aware. A fish can't see the water that they swim in. So, you're not aware of your breathing, the thing you do all the time to keep you alive. It's just the same as white supremacy, and of course, it was supported – I'm sure it was the same in Germany – by media images.

Figure 1. BBC's Black & White Minstrel Show. Not dated (the show ran from 1958 to 1978). Source: The Black and White Minstrel Show (n.d.).

When I was growing up, there was something called the Black and White Minstrel Show on the BBC (see Figure 1). Every Sunday night, we would watch these white male and female singers in blackface, caricaturing the old minstrel shows (see Figure 2). It was a straight reproduction of them.

I remember having Robertson's jam – a famous jam, where there was what they call a Golliwog on it, which was a little blackface boy (see Figures 3 & 4).

Figure 2. The Strobridge Litho Co. originally published this reproduction of a 1900 William H. West minstrel show poster. It shows the transformation from a person of European descent to a caricature of a dark-skinned person of African descent. This image is available from the United States Library of Congress's Prints and Photographs division under the digital ID var.1831.

Figure 3. Robertson's jam's Golliwog (Petcher, 2012).

These images were everywhere. There were also a lot of stereotypical racial jokes that my friends and I would tell without even thinking about it. In friendship networks, I was captain of the soccer team in my school. Whenever we played a match, there were lots of jokes that were told around race. Even in my own family, there were references to different races, not all of them negative. Still, where South Asians from the Indian subcontinent were involved, they were pretty racist.

Figure 4. Florence Kate Upton's Golliwog in formal minstrel attire in *The adventures of two Dutch dolls and a 'Golliwogg'* (2023), first published in 1895. Public domain.

I had no interaction with anyone other than that GI. Then, when I went to college at 18, that was the first time I really had any sustained conversations with anyone who wasn't white. It's interesting to me that when I was in college, which was from 1967 to 1970, those dim and distant days in the last century [all laugh], I did all the right racial things. At the time, the South Africans still had a strong apartheid regime, and the South African rugby team was touring England. We would go to demonstrate against that at the rugby grounds. I remember being charged by police on horses. I had a black roommate and Pakistani friends. On one level, I had, I guess, antiracist credentials, but as always, for me as a white person, I could really choose when it came to race. I could say, 'Okay, today I need to think about race and talk to my friends about it,' and then on other days, I didn't need to, whereas they had to deal with it every day, of course. I was at a kind of cognitive understanding to some degree from 17 to 18 years old. But I don't think it had any emotional or visceral resonance until much later.

Confronting historical legacies through anti-racist advocacy

JR: My next question follows up on this. You were born in the UK, a country with a history of colonialism (and its inherent racism and white supremacy that you just illustrated so well). I was born in Germany, a country that will forever be associated with the Nazis, the Holocaust, and other horrible atrocities based on racist beliefs during the Third Reich.

When it comes to the U.S. (where you have spent most of your life), racial injustice began with the original sin of slavery. Even after its hard-fought abolition, it has endured due to white supremacist beliefs and racial discrimination. We believe you became increasingly aware of your own 'race-blindness' in the early 1990s and started to study the

topic extensively during a self-imposed silence on race (in terms of publishing) that lasted a decade. Since 2003, you finally began to write about race, especially in the context of higher education. You wrote in your most recent book:

> We were inspired by the Black Lives Matter movement, outraged by the growth of anti-Blackness in the United States, and staggered by the way it became legal to tear immigrant families apart at the U.S. border and imprison children like animals in cages. Each week brought further instances of the slaughter of people of color and the demonization of anyone not of white European descent (Brookfield & Hess, 2021, p. 13).

What motivated you to write, in addition to numerous articles, two books on teaching race and becoming a white antiracist (Brookfield & Associates, 2018; Brookfield & Hess, 2021) and coedit *The handbook of race and adult education* (Sheared et al., 2010)? Was it a sense of a never-ending grave injustice and unfairness?

SB: This is a good question to think about. I must have said this somewhere, or you intuited it that I didn't write about this for a while. Like a lot of Whites in the U.S., I felt like it wasn't my place to be writing about race because I really hadn't any sustained experience of being on the receiving end of racism. But as a critical theorist, you're always interested in how permanent inequality becomes seen as normal, natural and just, accepted as the way the world is organized by some natural, universal law. Of course, race was a part of that and I knew all that. So, I have always had an interest, since I was aware of that theory as a young guy, in how things are set up in a society to make these massive discrepancies of power and access seem like common sense.

As a critical theorist, you're always interested in how permanent inequality becomes seen as normal, natural and just, accepted as the way the world is organized by some natural, universal law. Of course, race was a part of that.

But what really focused me on race was in the '90s, as you say. I had an experience of working for about ten years with two African-American women who were colleagues of mine in a program I set up – a doctoral program in adult education that I had helped create in Chicago at a university called National Louis University. One-third to a half of the students were African American or people of color, which was unusual for me as I hadn't had that strong a representation in classes I'd taught before. I was in a teaching team of three. My other two colleagues were African-American women: one of whom was Elizabeth Peterson, a critical race theorist, and one of whom was an Afrocentric theorist, and her name was Scipio Colin III. In fact, Elizabeth and Scipio are both co-editors of the *Handbook on race and adult education*, which I was one of the co-editors of (Sheared et al., 2010).

That experience was crucial for me. We were teaching about adult learning and adult education, but a lot of it brought up questions of racial identity. Through Scipio, I was looking

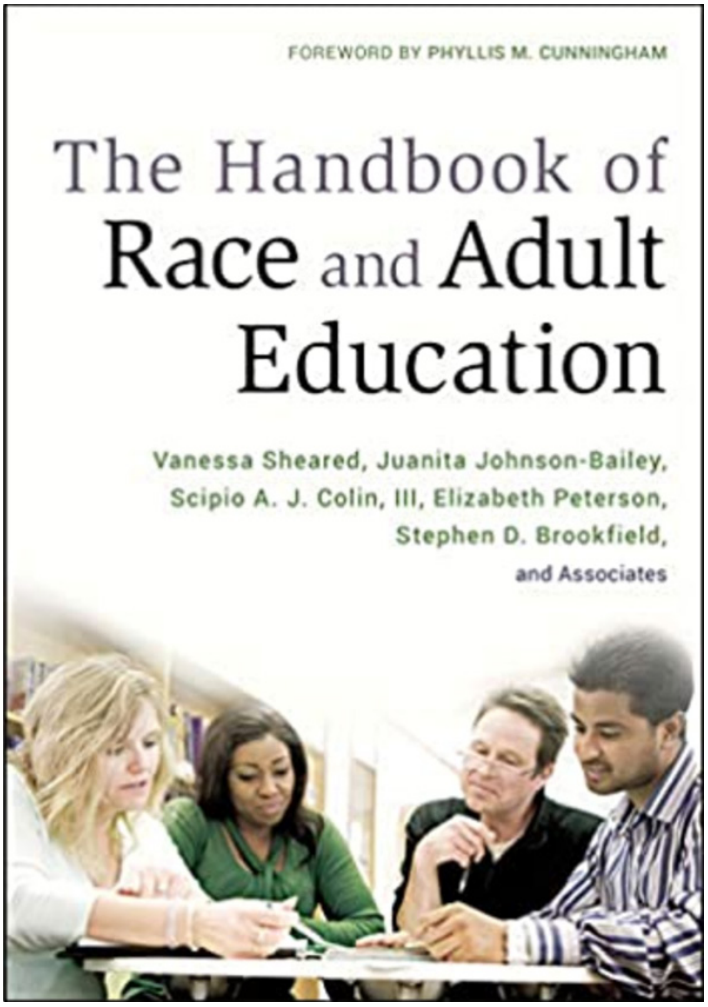

Figure 5: Book cover of Sheared et al.'s *The handbook of race and adult education* (2010).

at this Afrocentric model, which was an alternative to a Eurocentric model, and thinking: how would an Afrocentric model play itself out in terms of learning and in terms of adult educational practice? Elizabeth really introduced me to critical race theory, the works of Derrick Bell (1995) and so on. So, that was a big learning experience for me and just working for a decade with a lot of students of color and those two colleagues of color – plus others, but those two in particular – it was an education in the experience of what it's like to be surrounded by white supremacy: even in Chicago, which is known as a very multiracial city: how they experienced racism all the time, both the students and my colleagues.

I also remember being called out in the early '90s by a colleague of mine, Elizabeth Kasl. She was a colleague of mine first at Teachers College, and then we kept in touch. She moved out to the California Institute of Integral Studies in San Francisco. I remember vividly having coffee one day and her asking me, 'Where is race in your books?' And I said, 'Well, I don't really need to deal with race; I'm talking about learning'. She challenged me on that, and that was a big conversation for me as well.

Also, I had this developing awareness that to be on the right side of history, you need to be trying to work in an anti-racist way. But also, this understanding of white supremacy,

while it was advantaging me as a white person, was also damaging me as a white person. What I mean by that is if you believe at some superficial level in white supremacy, if you buy that myth as it were, you have to live in this state of suspended belief. Because everywhere you see examples that counter white supremacist assertions about white people being calm and reasonable and using logic, and therefore being entrusted with making decisions because they stay objective.

That clearly is so obviously not the case. In some ways, I often think that the four years when Trump was in power certainly deepened white supremacy, but also made it clear to everyone how crazy that idea is, as you looked at what that administration did and how they acted. So, you can't really live believing in white supremacy without doing this cognitive bifurcation and disregarding all this empirical evidence about the insanity of decisions from white people and the craziness of their actions in order to keep white supremacy intact in your head. I don't think many people are able to do that.

On the one hand, you need to be able to escape this schizophrenic state that you're living in. On the other hand, if you really, truly believe that everybody of color is potentially violent and unpredictable and way too emotional and things can erupt at any moment with them, then, as you live in a multiracial world as a white person, you're living in a state of constant fear, uncertainty, and mistrust of people of color around you. Although the world of higher education is overwhelmingly white, it is not completely white, and community colleges, which I think are at the frontlines of higher education in the United States, are much more racially representative of what the United States looks like. I've done much work with community colleges. So, it's unhealthy to live with this constant fear of the other.

When I moved to New York in 1982 to take up a position at Teachers College [Columbia University], we lived right on the edge of Harlem. To go through the day fearful every time I saw a face that wasn't white would have been just horrendous for me. A lot of what I say to white people that I'm working with is – I appeal to a sense of self-interest saying – 'Look, racism has all these social and moral sins attached to it. We need to be fighting it for the sake of having just common humanity, but we also need to be fighting it because it benefits us to fight it as Whites'. I've found that argument – where you use your own self-interest – tends to reach people sometimes in ways that the transformative and moral arguments about the need to combat this inhumane system tend not to.

So, that's a long, rambling answer. But that's some of the motivations behind what got me into this. I decided I couldn't write anything on this until I've got a decade of really thinking about it and reading about it. So, I think my first piece on race came out in 2003, maybe; that's when I started publishing about it.

Challenging racial narratives: Dissecting racism and white supremacy

Shannon Tan (ST): Thank you for your fabulous answer. It was not rambling at all. By the way, it was not intuited that you had this ten-year pause; you wrote that somewhere. With discussions on race being often emotionally charged, some of the key terms (especially racism and white supremacy) are bound to be understood differently and contested. For instance, there is the prominent fairy tale that "deep racism doesn't exist anymore, that any Black person who works hard enough can become economically self-sufficient, that women have gained equality with men to the extent that White males are now the victim of minorities and domineering women, and that those who are poor and unemployed are in that state by choice" (Brookfield, 2005, p. 331). How can we define some of the key terms, such as racism and white supremacy?

In *Becoming a white antiracist*, you write that race "is not real" in the sense that "race as a biologically determined category is a complete illusion", but "racism is very real" (Brookfield & Hess, 2021, p. 30). In Sheared et al. (2010, p. 2), you define racism as follows: "Racism exists when one racial group has power and authority over another racial group because of beliefs about race". In the same book chapter, you say that racism is "the ugly operationalization of the ideology of White supremacy" (Sheared et al., 2010, p. 15). In *Teaching race* (Brookfield, 2018, p. 2), you define racism as a "system of beliefs and practices that are embedded in the institutions we move through as individuals and routinized in the conventions of everyday lives". In the same book, Pamela Barnett (2018, p. 123) posits that racism is a system of beliefs and practices -

> in which public policies, institutional practices, cultural representations, and other norms work in various, often reinforcing ways to perpetuate racial group inequity. It identifies dimensions of our history and culture that have allowed privileges associated with 'whiteness' and disadvantages associated with 'color' to endure and adapt over time. Structural racism is not something that a few people or institutions choose to practice. Instead, it has been a feature of the social, economic and political systems in which we all exist.

Having observed that racism is structural, you advocate a systemic understanding of it:

> If racism is seen as an act of individual choice or individual sin, then acknowledging one's racism becomes mixed up with viewing oneself as an evil purveyor of hatred and bigotry. But if students become used to seeing racism as a systemic phenomenon, an ideology that is embedded and routinized in practices, habits, and structures that we are exposed to from an early age, then it become[s] obvious that for Whites not to have learned racism is impossible. So, constantly clarifying the systemic nature of racism is an important teaching act (Colin et al., 2010, p. 365).

Racism must be one of the most sensitive topics ever. To cite a quote from *Becoming a white antiracist:*

> [B]eing called a racist is considered *a very bad thing*… 'the worst thing to happen to anybody anywhere' [Oluo, 2018, p. 213]… For those who think of themselves as good, color-blind whites, it's the ultimate insult because it's usually applied to people who do overt violence against people of color, commit blatantly destructive acts, and use hate speech" (Brookfield & Hess, 2021, p. 89; emphasis in original).

The way you use the term 'white supremacy' does not refer so much to obvious examples such as the Ku Klux Klan (KKK), Aryan Nations and other extreme white nationalist terrorist groups, but rather "the idea that whites, because of their superior intellect and reasoning power, should be in control of decision-making for society as a whole" (Brookfield, 2018, p. 4). You perceive white supremacy as the all-pervasive "philosophical foundation of racism" (Brookfield, 2018, p. 4). This being a very contentious term, you also use alternate terms such as 'white advantage', 'white superiority', 'white privilege', 'white normativity', or 'white racial frame' (Brookfield & Hess, 2021, p. 32).

Can racism be purely understood in terms of skin colour? Within orientalism, the so-called 'Orientals' (whose skin colour could be as fair as that of whites) were pejoratively characterised as "backward, degenerate, uncivilized, and retarded" in order to be subjected and colonised by white supremacist, ethnocentric imperialists (Said, 2019, p. 207). Is such Orientalism not also racist? I believe you have addressed this in *Becoming a white antiracist* by using the term "BIPOC (Black, indigenous, and people of colour)" (Brookfield & Hess, 2021, p. xi) and of course, Orientalism is once again associated with white perpetrators.

Would you like to add to the definitory approaches on racism and white supremacy (and race) cited above? "Do you believe that racism is endemic and permanent" (Sheared et al., 2010, p. 23) in the U.S. as well as other nations and societies? Has it always existed, and can we never get rid of it? Is it possible to be in the apparently contradictory state of being "antiracist while also being in thrall of white supremacy" (Brookfield & Hess, 2021, p. 22)? Do you think that racism also exists in societies where Whites are not in the majority or dominant? Is it possible for racism to exist when Whites are not involved? Or can there be no racism without Whites? In other words: Is non-white racism a possibility? Is racism dependent on the amount of melanin of the victim and perpetrator? Sorry for the long question.

SB: That's okay. The first thing that I would say is that racism and white supremacy are two different things. But in the USA, in Western Europe and in the Northern Hemisphere, they are very much often conjoined together. But racism, as in the *Handbook of race and adult education* that you quoted back in 2010, is where one particular racial group entrenches its power and authority over other racial groups, either by overt violence and exclusion or by covert ideological manipulation – which is where the ideology of white supremacy comes in. But racism as a system of exclusion does not have to be practiced by white people.

Racism occurs when one particular racial group entrenches its power and authority over other racial groups, either by overt violence and exclusion or by covert ideological manipulation… Racism is a system of exclusion and does not have to be practiced by white people.

So, this speaks to several of your questions. Racism is this systemic, embedded exclusion, and that can be practiced by people of any skin color over another group that has a different skin pigmentation. So, it can be practiced within all kinds of black, brown, indigenous or Asian communities. It's not inherently a white European thing. It's just that the history of the world and the more recent world in the 18th, 19th and 20th centuries, the history of European colonialism and imperialism, means that the most glaring examples of racism are associated with white imperialism. But racism itself is just a system of structural exclusion based on racial identity, so that could happen potentially with any group at all. White supremacy is the kind of ideological justification of racism as it's practiced in the U.S. – I guess, I could say in Germany and certainly in the UK as well.

It's important to see those two terms as different. They're certainly conjoined and intersect in certain contexts, like in the United States. In the history of the world, basically, the one thing that you can guarantee is that at any point, some kind of genocide is being carried out by one group against another, based either on racial or ethnic identity or on other matters, possibly having to do with religious or tribal affiliation. So, this system of structural violence and exclusion is pretty much everywhere. Sometimes it shows up as being based around race, sometimes it shows up as being based around other identities, other kinds of characteristics. But then, when we look specifically at the world that I'm in, which is the United States, the most overwhelming form of racism is associated with whiteness and justified by white supremacy. That's the ideology that makes racism okay to a lot of people. So, you grow up with notions of whiteness that leadership looks like and being taught that the important historical characters who shaped the nation are the founding fathers of the United States. You see white supremacy there, and you see patriarchy as well, very much those two dominant ideologies. But if you look around the world, you have ethnic genocide.

In the history of the world, the one thing that you can guarantee is that at any point, some kind of genocide is being carried out by one group against another, based either on racial or ethnic identity or on other matters, maybe having to do with religious or tribal affiliation. This system of structural violence and exclusion is pretty much everywhere.

If you think of Bosnia or Rwanda, those are instances of ethnic genocide. You can see this in China and all around the world constantly. In my own life, I think of Northern Ireland, which was based on a religious divide, a desire to cleanse Northern Ireland of Catholics, make them leave and cross the border into Ireland itself, and to keep Northern Ireland part of the UK. I grew up in a system in which not only there was white supremacy, but also there was this ethnic stereotyping of Irish as less intelligent, as people who drank all the time, are constantly drunk, are constantly trying to avoid work. So, they were lazy. They were unintelligent. There were a lot of jokes about the lack of intelligence shown by Irish people. There were signs, when you went looking for places to rent in London, as I did in the early 1970s, saying "No Irish, no blacks, no dogs" [laughs].

Figure 6. A sign reading "No Irish, No Blacks, No Dogs". Source: Draper (2015).

At this time, you could do that without legal penalty. And then when you look at communities of color, I've often heard my colleagues and friends of African descent tell me that there's clearly white supremacy within those communities: so that the lighter-skinned you are, as broadly speaking a person of African descent, the more desirable your views are, the more intelligent or, the more befitted you are for leadership. So, if you have a child that's born very dark and another child is born very white, you're usually happy about the very white child because there is this sense that the barriers will be slightly less to them. And they're considered more attractive and more beautiful. That colorism also comes from white supremacy.

Colorism comes from white supremacy.

My particular focus on white supremacy is because for the last 40 years, I've lived and worked in the USA, and that's very clearly the predominant form of racism that exists. It exists to justify a system of structural exclusion that you cannot avoid witnessing in the United States.

But if I were in a different context, there would be other forms of structural exclusion based on racial identity or within the same racial group based on ethnic identity. This is just part and parcel of what it means when humans organize themselves in groups and live together. This seems to be a constant feature of history. In terms of that question, 'Do I regard this stuff as endemic and permanent?' Yes, I do. It's very clearly the case in the parts of the world that I know, which are Western Europe and the United States. I would say broadly that white Commonwealth nations and the other nations that have been colonized in the 17th, 18th, and 19th centuries, all have a lot of white supremacy still embedded in their culture. So, I do regard it as permanent and endemic, and of course, that's part of a critical theory worldview. That's the first thing you look for as you think about your world. You look for structural inequity and how that's made to seem normal. So, it's not a big surprise to me or a big leap to see the world in that way.

Racism is endemic and permanent... I do think it's always existed. Can we ever get rid of it? As with many things, even though historical and empirical evidence disproves the possibility, you have to act as if the possibility is true and realizable.

I do think it's always existed. Can we ever get rid of it? As with many things, even though historical and empirical evidence disproves the possibility, you have to act as if the possibility is true and realizable. So, can we ever get rid of it? I don't know. But we have to try; we have to believe that that is possible and that it can constantly be pushed back and diminished because I'm essentially, I guess, a modernist. I have always believed that progress is possible, but I also realize that any progress will be resisted and will be pushed back against very severely.

Is it possible to be in the apparently contradictory state of being antiracist while also being enmeshed in white supremacy? Yes, because I am. In *Becoming a white antiracist*, that's what Mary Hess and I were arguing: The two of us will never lose the fact that we've been soaked and indoctrinated and learned this white supremacy at a deep level from an early age. But you can recognize that that's the case and think about how you're going to push back against it, how you're going to limit its influence in your own actions, but particularly how you can help organizations and institutions and communities name it as an important reality.

Is it possible to be in the apparently contradictory state of being antiracist while also being enthralled by white supremacy? Yes, because I am.

I think about how we're going to try and dismantle it in the best way that we can. Do I think racism exists in societies where non-Whites are not in the majority or dominance? I think that structural exclusion exists in those societies. Sometimes, yes, that is based on race; sometimes, it's based in racially homogenous societies around class or gender or ethnicity, those other dimensions. Is it possible for racism to exist where Whites are not involved? Yes, it really depends on which racial group is dominant. That is why, in the United States, when I talk about racism, I always have the notion of white supremacy there. So, it's racism and white supremacy: racism – the structure of exclusion – and white supremacy – the ideological justification for that structure to be in place in this country.

I always try to remember and tell people that you also have to understand that racism is usually linked to some kind of political or economic project. In order to justify treating one group in an inhumane way, putting them through horrendous working conditions, and exploiting their labor, you need to view them as less than human; you need to view them as expendable animals. Slavery, in many ways, built the economy in the United States; there was a need for cheap labor – not just cheap labor, but free labor. For white Christians to justify that, you have to carry this idea in your head that 'Well, when the Bible talks about people, they're not really referring to, let's say, black and brown or indigenous peoples because those aren't really people. They're subhuman. They're animals. That's why it's fine for us to exploit them because we're not contravening God's will or we're not contradicting the teachings of Christ.'

Is non-white racism a possibility? Yes, non-white racism is definitely a possibility, depending on the context and geography. Is racism dependent on the amount of melanin? In the United States, that's how it's constructed. Genetically, across the world, there's hardly any difference between humans – at least, that's where we are in our understanding of genetics right now – the differences are extremely minor. But racism is this construct that people erect to justify treating another group in the ways we described and exploiting them for their own benefit. So, racism is not dependent on the amount of melanin. But racism in the United States, because it's associated with white supremacy, is dependent on the amount of melanin in the victim and perpetrators. That's how we decide that another group can be treated in an inhumane way: because they do not look white.

Genetically, across the world, there's hardly any difference between humans – at least, that's where we are in our understanding of genetics right now – the differences are extremely minor.

JR: I had some nagging doubts when reading *Teaching race* (Brookfield & Associates, 2018) and *Becoming a white antiracist* (Brookfield & Hess, 2021). Having this conversation with you today is really so clarifying. We found your discussion of the various types of racist violence (structural, cultural and direct) most insightful. Citing Galtung (1969, pp. 171, 191), the structural violence of racism manifests itself as "unequal power and consequently… unequal life chances", while the cultural violence of racism refers to cultural aspects (assigning individual characteristics such as 'inferior', 'lazy', 'stupid', or 'inherently violent') "that can be used to justify or legitimate direct or structural violence". Structural and cultural violence are then "used to justify direct violence, as housing is destroyed in gentrification, calls for justice are repressed as riots and unarmed people of colour are disproportionately killed by police" (Klein, 2018, p. 105). Another indication of systemic racism is the mass incarceration of black people. Is violence in communities of colour a symptom of (rather than a cause for) poverty and a reaction to the different types of racist violence outlined above?

SB: I'm going to speak about the USA, first of all, and I would say that the celebration of violence in this culture is very clear to me as someone who didn't live here. I moved here when I was 33. For the last 40 years, I have lived here. It is very clear that the deification of guns, the Second Amendment (the right to bear arms), and the belief that everybody is almost like a frontier settler who needs to defend themselves against the 'savages' (that was the word that was used to refer to the tribal nations, the indigenous people in the U.S.) is how people typically grow up. That glorification of violence is not limited to any community at all. It is very much an American value.

So, I think we have to understand this in the context of the whole American cultural celebration of violence. Growing up, I'm sure, you in Germany as I in the United Kingdom, we saw a lot of Westerns where the pure white settlers were shooting and killing Indians just indiscriminately from horses as they were attacking the wagon train or from a farm homestead. So, it's very much a part of the American psyche. I wanted to say that first of all.

It's a very dangerous thing when white people make generalizations about, in particular, black or brown culture. There's that part of how white supremacy perpetuates itself because there are a lot of generalizations and stereotypes that whites invoke about communities that they've never visited. Even the police overwhelmingly live in communities other than those that they're responsible for policing, and they regard these communities as homes for intentionally violent people, full of criminals, lacking intelligence, and so on and so forth. But I can speak about the question as a white person because I have experience of how white supremacy is learned, and I'm sure I've enacted multiple times the perpetuation of these kinds of stereotypes. It's easy for me to fall into them.

That's why it's so important for me to have constant contact and work with and try to live with people of color so that I get this counter-narrative. So, if you look at media in the United States, they have made an enormous amount of money through rap, hip hop and gangsta rap, which celebrates gang life and people killing each other, depending on the particular gang that they're in. So, that whole genre of gangsta rap celebrates the particularly black-on-black, black-on-brown, brown-on-black, brown-on-brown kinds of violence.

What you don't get are other images of black life that you encounter when you actually talk and live and work with black or brown people: essentially, their life being focused on the church is a major part of life and of the community; it's focused on deep community, it's focused on incorporating spirituality into their lives. There's this very strong sense of fierce collectivism, 'we're going to get through this together', a strong emphasis on loving relationships, on family, on food.

All of those things are kind of on the periphery of white consciousness of black life. Because they counter the narrative that white supremacy has taught us, which is essentially that folks of color are constantly on the verge of exploding into some kind of violent criminal activity.

Figure 7: Cover art for N.W.A's album *Straight Outta Compton*, the first blockbuster gangsta rap album released in 1988. Album Cover art and design by Helane Freeman. The cover art copyright is believed to belong to the label, Ruthless Records and Priority Records, or the graphic artist(s). Fair use.

As I said, I don't want to talk about the reality in those communities. But I can talk about the reality of how white supremacy has structured a white view of what goes on in those communities and how, in terms of my limited experience, the reality in those communities is much fuller and richer. Certainly, the communities are worried about violence, as any community would be. But the reality has much more to do with collective pride, with relationships, with family, with holding together in the face of a sustained onslaught, with staying very vital and alive through music and song and dance and food and the incredibly vibrant artistic forms and representations that you find in black and brown communities. That stuff tends not to be featured because it doesn't fit the white supremacist narrative.

The silencing of critical race theory

ST: We now propose to turn our attention to Critical Race Theory (CRT). The term *intersectionality* refers to the interconnected nature of social categorisations such as race, class, gender, sexual orientation, ability and age as they apply to a given individual (or group), thus creating overlapping and interdependent systems of discrimination and disadvantage. Identities are complex and plural. Mike Klein argues against "black and white (pun intended)" categories that prevail in popular culture. He states that race is socially constructed and complicated by categories such as "ethnicity, nationality and hybridity" (Klein, 2018, p. 101).

Is there a need for an intersectional perspective (that addresses racism in addition to classism, sexism, ageism and ableism)? Would you agree that you have advanced critical theory by incorporating Cornel West, Bell Hooks and Angela Davis in your own magisterial interpretation of critical theory (Brookfield, 2005)? What are, in your view, the main aspects of CRT? For the last couple of years, conservative U.S. lawmakers have sought to ban or restrict CRT from primary and secondary schools (e.g. in Idaho, Iowa, Oklahoma, Tennessee and Texas). Why do they want to silence discussions of racism, equality, social justice, and the history of race in the classroom? Again, apologies for the barrage of questions.

SB: Yeah, but they're all good ones and things I think about a lot. In fact, I recently wrote a foreword to a book, which is a conversation around how we integrate a class analysis of inequality with a racial analysis (Brookfield, 2023). And do they need to be separated at some point? Or should they always be an intersectional analysis? This is in my head right now.

Is there a need for an intersectional perspective addressing racism in addition to these other isms? Yes, of course, I don't see how anyone could not see that an intersectional perspective is important. However, I say that with a qualification, which is that in the United States, where obviously I'm located, people are generally more comfortable talking about even sexism – and the patriarchy that justifies it – and classism, ableism, and ageism. Those are isms, generally, that it's easier to talk about. At least, this has been my experience.

Maybe I'm just speaking in an anecdotal way that others can't support. But in my own work, I have noticed that the hardest thing to get people to do is to focus on race as a category of analysis. All the other isms that justify structural exclusion are much easier to get the conversation around. So, when you do an intersection analysis with a group, what you have to watch out for is race being lost in that. So, that means that as an educator, I have to foreground race. I believe I do anyway; I've constantly drawn attention to this. I sometimes say, 'Well, these other isms are important, but we need to focus on race right now because that's the thing that keeps getting lost'. As long as people are unwilling to talk about it and don't know how to talk about it, it's very difficult to know how to address the ism associated with racial identity. So, I see the complete validity of intersectional analysis, and I agree with it, but I also know that talking about race is the hardest thing for many to do. So, I need to keep focusing on that particular ism, because it's the one that will get lost if I don't do that.

> ***I see the complete validity of intersectional analysis, and I agree with it, but I also know that talking about race is the hardest thing for many to do.***

In *The power of critical theory* (Brookfield, 2005), I wanted to do an intersectional analysis. I deliberately have a chapter in that book on sexism and patriarchy. I have a chapter that you cite on racism and white supremacy. I wanted to show how that critical theory tradition was still incredibly accurate, helpful and relevant for the late 20th and early 21st centuries. So, that's why I had those chapters in that book. Again, I feel that when we look at critical theory, structural inequity and

so on, it is easy to lose race in that analysis. I didn't want that to happen with my own work.

But I do sometimes get criticized for neglecting all the other things by what many people see as the consistent focus on race that I have had in the last few years. But again, that's deliberately a strategic decision. My reason for doing that as a white person is to give a little example of how Whites can engage in a critical theory-influenced analysis which focuses exclusively on race.

What are the main aspects of critical race theory for me and their tie to critical theory? First of all, there's this view of racism as endemic. Critical theory views exclusionary isms as endemic, and critical race theory views racism as endemic. So, that's clearly an obvious axiom for me. Critical race theory has really advanced the idea of counter-narratives and using personal experience and personal testimony as an educational tool to get people to look at race. So, I am a strong proponent of using narrative. I find it less than ideal to start off with statistics of the school-to-prison pipeline, disproportionate access to education, the way that COVID has disproportionately affected communities around race or how toxic waste dumps typically tend to be sighted in communities of color – you can talk about all those things and quote statistics. But it's not as powerful a tool, educationally speaking, as hearing a compelling story, hearing an individual talk about how that affected their life. That's one reason why I use a lot of digital stories, things I find online as beginning points of access into looking at race.

Then, after a while, once you've got people's attention, you can step back, and then bring in the statistics and the theoretical stuff. So, that's the second part of CRT, which has really been influential on me. The principle of interest convergence is a very important insight: this idea that massive, permanent structural change will only come about when Whites see it as being in their own self-interest. It speaks to the nature of a multiracial movement or a multiracial alliance. It speaks to the point that Whites have to be involved in this work in different ways, but they are absolutely necessary and important to it. It also speaks to what I was talking about earlier when I was trying to argue that it's in our own self-interest to get rid of these toxic ideas because if we believe them, we're engaging in all kinds of incredible intellectual gymnastics to convince ourselves that Whites really are the inherently superior group [all laugh]. Or we're living in constant fear of anyone who doesn't look like us.

> ***The principle of interest convergence is a very important insight: this idea that massive, permanent structural change will only come about when Whites see it as being in their own self-interest. It speaks to the nature of a multiracial movement or a multiracial alliance.***

That principle of interest convergence has been very important to me. Finally, CRT's emphasis on intersectionality is very important because that has always been a consistent part of any CRT analysis I've read. Even though they're talking about race, they're also saying 'race is not the whole reality; there are other systems of exclusion based on different positionalities and identities that are in play in the United States'.

When you ask about attempts to ban critical race theory, it's quite incredible to me that we have executive orders banning the mention of critical race theory, as we did under the last President Donald Trump. You could not refer to critical race theory and certainly not teach it. Not even name it and mention it in any kind of federal training! So, there we have a direct example of state ideological control in play: very clear, naked, nothing covert about it, it really laid out the battle lines.

That was partly an attempt to play to a very conservative, evangelical, right-wing base. But also, it's symptomatic of the real fear that a lot of those in the elites in power feel, that now this race stuff is getting out of hand. In the past, you could have demonstrations. You can convince people that legislation has taken care of the problem when it really hasn't; it's just reconfigured the ways in which this permanent endemic racism is enacted.

Figure 8: Tributes and mural outside Cup Foods, where Floyd was murdered. Photo by. Vasanth Rajkumar. CC BY-SA 4.0.

There's this sense that President Obama's election, first of all, was a real challenge, but his policies were mostly centrist. But there was such alarm triggered by having a black president that it ushered in this enormous right-wing wave of fervor and hatred of anything black and a desire to dismantle everything that Barack Obama had done. Trump's and the Republican Party's legislative agenda was an attempt to turn the clock back on everything that Obama had managed to do during his eight years. You had all that, and then you have the film of George Floyd dying in May 2020, minutes and minutes passing, while you see a man fall into unconsciousness, complaining that he can't breathe. You see that psychopathic stare from the police in their attempts to hold people back and not render any help. So, you have this wave of outrage and the possibility of mass mobilization across racial lines because there are a lot of white members showing up to Black Lives Matter protests and participating in those in different ways.

The reason why CRT is being banned is that now, there's a real sense of fear on the part of those rich white elites who disproportionately control resources and economic life. When you look at where these attempts to ban CRT come from and who they're funded by, you trace the money. It comes from white billionaires behind enormous companies in the United States who fund all this stuff. If you've been reading about the fact that Canada had this truck convoy that just paralysed Ottawa and trade in the eastern part of Canada, you trace the funding. It's from U.S. corporations, these rich white elites who own enormous resources. It's a sense of a realistic threat to the status quo that is behind these attempts to quash that threat and make sure the status quo is not really challenged at any fundamental level. And the way that it's happened is the old ideological trick to conflate a certain point of view with being un-American, anti-American or unpatriotic.

Now schools are not allowed to teach perspectives that mention white racism, white supremacy or the exploitation of other races by Whites. Because that's seen as unpatriotic and countering the dominant narrative of the United States, which is: 'We are an evolving democracy in which a meritocratic system operates, and everybody has the possibility to flourish'. So, as critical race theory would say, that's the official story, the official narrative, but the counter-narrative is becoming much more widespread, especially amongst the young. I guess rich white elites say, 'We got to do something about it. Desperate times call for desperate measures. So, we'll ban this perspective as part of public education in the United States, and we'll ban this perspective in terms of any federal training'.

There were times in the last days of the Trump era when I was doing my work around anti-racism, and I was having to work within the confines, certainly in any federal stuff. But even not in the federal government, the influence of that order not to use CRT got people very spooked in all kinds of institutions, particularly public institutions. I would get lots of questions: 'When are you going to reference critical race theory?'

I take it mostly as a sign that rich white elites realize we're at a potential turning point here in this country, and so the divisions and the battle lines are being drawn ever more clearly. That's not always a bad thing because once those lines are clear, you have to choose a side; you have to say which side you're on and which side you're going to support and work for. You can't go through your life thinking: 'Well, we're making progress. The civil rights era has brought us a long way and things are not as bad anymore as they were 40, 50, 60 or 70 years ago'. As a white person, it's easy to carry that narrative in your head. I don't think you can carry that narrative anymore. So, there's a clear cultural war going on here in the United States, and there always has been; that's part of how an elite maintains its power by manipulating the ideology that's prevalent in a culture, but usually, it's not done so overtly as it is now.

Is cosmopolitanism a viable alternative to racism?

JR: Your co-author, Mary Hess (2018), discusses cosmopolitanism in *Teaching race*: one "can become, indeed should aspire to be, a citizen of the world, able to embrace local ties and commitments, but also to extend well beyond them, engaging a wider human community, even across divides of seemingly irreconcilable differences" (Avila & Pandya, cited in Hess, 2018, p. 270). Also, Kwame Anthony Appiah (2006) articulates a cosmopolitan community where individuals from varying physical or economic locations enter relationships of mutual respect despite their differing political or religious beliefs. Is cosmopolitanism a viable alternative to racism inasmuch as it assumes that all human beings are members of a single community? Or is cosmopolitanism yet another privileged perspective that is class-based?

SB: Another very interesting question! I would just start off by repeating my assertion that in terms of genetics and biology, we all are members of a single community. There is so much more genetically that unites us than divides us across the world. So, again, notions of racial, ethnic, and other divisions are entirely human constructions that have nothing to do with biology. I haven't really used the term *cosmopolitanism* in my own work, but one of the things that I learned from reading more deeply and talking to others about the Afrocentric perspective is that that perspective, even though it is a culturally-based one, recognizes and honors the validity of other culturally based paradigms. An Afrocentric perspective, briefly defined, is one grounded in African cultural values of collectivism in particular, rather than in a Eurocentric perspective where individual independence, solo, critical thinking, being the captain of your own ship, of your own soul, constructing your own life as an individual, that's the paradigm there. The Afrocentric paradigm and also other paradigms – indigenous, tribal, and even working-class perspectives – are much more collectively-based.

> ***In terms of genetics and biology, we all are members of a single community; there is so much more genetics that unites us than divides us across the world. Notions of racial, ethnic, and other divisions are entirely human constructions that have nothing to do with biology.***

One thing the Afrocentric paradigm emphasizes is that it is just one way of looking at the world alongside many others and that there are multiple ways of understanding the world. None has any inherent superiority or validity. I really liked that part of Afrocentrism. It did not proclaim that it wanted to replace European or Eurocentric epistemology; it just said, 'We have a different set of interests and worldviews that are counter to what tends to get privileged in Eurocentrism'. Politically and ecologically, we're interdependent, whether we like it or not.

You can't really separate interests out in an independent way because we are interdependent with each other. We're interdependent with the world, with a natural world, with Mother Earth, with the ecosystem. So, we're seeing the

effects of living in a Eurocentric way and the influence of positivist epistemology, which separates humans from the land, separates humans from nature, and assumes that nature is there to be controlled and manipulated for human advantage. The consequences of that are now really coming home to roost and threatening the continued existence of everybody in the world. So, if anything should prove the truth of independence, you would think it would be the damage to the ecosystem that's happening.

My own preference is to focus on collectivism; I tend to use that word a lot rather than something like cosmopolitanism. In the US, collectivism is not a privileged perspective. Certainly, we talk about being good neighbors, and there is this myth that in crisis, everybody will help each other, and we'll get through this. But in reality, it is one class, one race, one ethnicity pitted against the other, sometimes very deliberately, as part of how white supremacy keeps itself unchallenged.

Collectivism is often associated as socialistic or even communistic, as un-American, anti-American. So, in the United States, the word *communitarian* is used a lot. There's been a lot of stuff in the '90s around communitarian philosophy and the need to re-animate communitarianism within the United States as a counter to this fervent, rabid individualism that is so much baked into the American cultural pie. In terms of empirical reality, we are interdependent, and there isn't that much that divides us biologically speaking; we are a single-world community. The things that divide us are humanly constructed, and therefore, if something is humanly constructed, logically, it can be humanly deconstructed and reconstructed. This goes back to your earlier question: 'Is racism endemic?' Well, yes, it is, but it's been humanly constructed. Therefore, ending it is logically possible. If something has been constructed, it can be deconstructed and reconstructed.

Racism in higher education

ST: In *Teaching race* (Brookfield, 2018, p. 2), you state that racism is glaringly obvious in several aspects of the educational sphere: in admissions policies, disciplinary guidelines, curricula, hiring practices, attrition rates for faculty and students of colour, and the composition of boards of trustees. At the same time, Marcuse's (1969) concept of repressive tolerance is also applicable to race in higher education:

> "By allowing a limited amount of protest that is carefully managed, a societal pressure valve is created to release into thin air the real change. Diversity days, Black History Month…, colleges and universities featuring photos of Black, Brown, or Asian students on their publicity materials (when such students comprise only a small minority of actual students)... - all these can be seen as examples of repressive tolerance" (Brookfield & Holst, 2011, p. 28).

Could you please elaborate on your insights and observations on racism in the educational sector?

SB: I speak again from personal experience here. In a lot of different institutional contexts, there's a very predictable course of events that I've witnessed over the years: an institution – it could be a college, university, school, corporation, government agency, religious organization, military or any kind of organization – is accused by a particular group of systemic racism or hate crimes are highlighted that have happened on site. This becomes public. Now the institution feels 'We have to do something to demonstrate to the world that we're taking race seriously, we're not a racist organization'. There are these very predictable things that happen.

The first is the public relations work – you've already quoted John Holst and me referencing this – where you work on your website, on your Instagram or Twitter accounts, on the brochures, your admissions pages, and your alumni magazines, which in the U.S. is a very important source of raising money. All these things now feature a rainbow coalition of different racial identities that make it look as though your organization has nicely balanced, equal proportions of black, brown, white, indigenous, and Asian faces. So, that's the first thing that happens. It's a total fiction. I've spoken to many individual students or faculty who are sick of having their faces plastered and being highlighted and featured because they recognize this as a con job. This is a public relations manipulation and nothing more. So, that's very much an example of racism that looks like it's antiracist. It is actually racism in the sense that it's perpetuating the system and keeping a fundamental challenge to the system at bay.

A lot of institutions now – I don't really know of any institutions that don't – proclaim 'We are about diversity, equity and inclusion'. Sometimes, they'll go as far as saying: 'We are an antiracist institution, and here are all the workshops that we've run to justify that claim'. So, you put on a lot of anti-bias or microaggressions workshops on different topics around diversity and inclusion. And it looks like you're really taking this seriously because 'look at all these workshops'. But again, nothing fundamental is being changed in regard to admissions, funding priorities, how student work is being assessed, and what behaviors are taken into account when promotion, retention, and tenure decisions are taking place.

Another thing that happens – again, which looks antiracist, but in fact, is a way of deflecting antiracism – is that you appoint some people of color to an influential position. So, now you can say, 'Look, we have a diversity office run by this particular individual who is a person of color, so clearly, we take this seriously'. Or you drop a body of color into different units across the institution, and you highlight that 'Well, now we have a person of color in mathematics or in biology or whatever the discipline is. You see, we're really taking racism seriously, and we're trying to be antiracist'. The problem is that you drop those people into this sea of whiteness with no support for them. They're the only black, brown or indigenous person in the department. They're the ones who have always volunteered to serve on diversity committees or task forces to represent your department. So,

they have this whole load of extra work to do simply because of their racial identity. But you don't give them the support. So, after a couple of years, they burn out, and they leave. I've seen this happen over and over again. Because essentially, when you appoint this person, you're saying, 'Yes, we want you to teach mathematics or biology, but we also want you to take on a second full-time job of being someone who will educate the rest of us Whites about what racism is and how we can push back against it. But we're not going to name that as a job responsibility, and we're not going to pay you anything. So basically, you have two jobs, but you don't get paid for one'. I've had a lot of colleagues of color talk about that frustration to me and how they're always the ones who are asked to serve on diversity committees.

Another thing is that as you're setting up diversity initiatives, you frame them. This may be reiterating the point I've just made, but you frame them as the responsibility of people of color. Most diversity offices are headed by a person of color; you'll rarely see a white person in charge. In one sense, that's completely understandable. Because a white person doesn't have the experience of being on the other end of racism. On the other hand, as we were talking about earlier, they do have the experience of how you enact, learn and reproduce white supremacy as normal behavior in your life. I'm always advocating that a multiracial team should run a diversity office, and one of the team members should be white. Because in the mix, we need to understand the continuing presence of unexamined white supremacy, that continuing refusal to look at what it means to be white whom institutions will have – particularly predominantly white institutions. You've got to break with that. The only way you can break with this is to have a multiracial conversation involving Whites as well as people of color about the way that white supremacy keeps reproducing itself.

As long as you keep white people out of that picture, you can successfully continue the idea that race really is a problem for people of color. But in fact, people from James Baldwin onward have made the point: 'No, the problem of race is the problem of white supremacy, unacknowledged white identity'. The problem of racism is a white problem. It's something that I had a lot of experience with and feel passionate about.

Another thing that I see happening is: 'We'll do diversity workshops'. Most people are very happy with the terms *diversity* or *inclusion*. 'We'll focus on diversity and inclusion, we'll celebrate all the different identities that we have and the different parts of the world. People on campus come from the different experiences they bring; we will enrich each other by learning about our different cultural identities and histories'.

Absent from that framing is racism or white supremacy. You can do a whole diversity and inclusion initiative – it's harder to do it around equity – you can do that by celebrating human difference and completely eliding any reference to racism. That way, it looks like you're addressing racism, but you're really just again avoiding tackling the issue in any meaningful way.

People from James Baldwin onward have made the point that the problem of race is the problem of white supremacy, unacknowledged white identity. The problem of racism is a white problem.

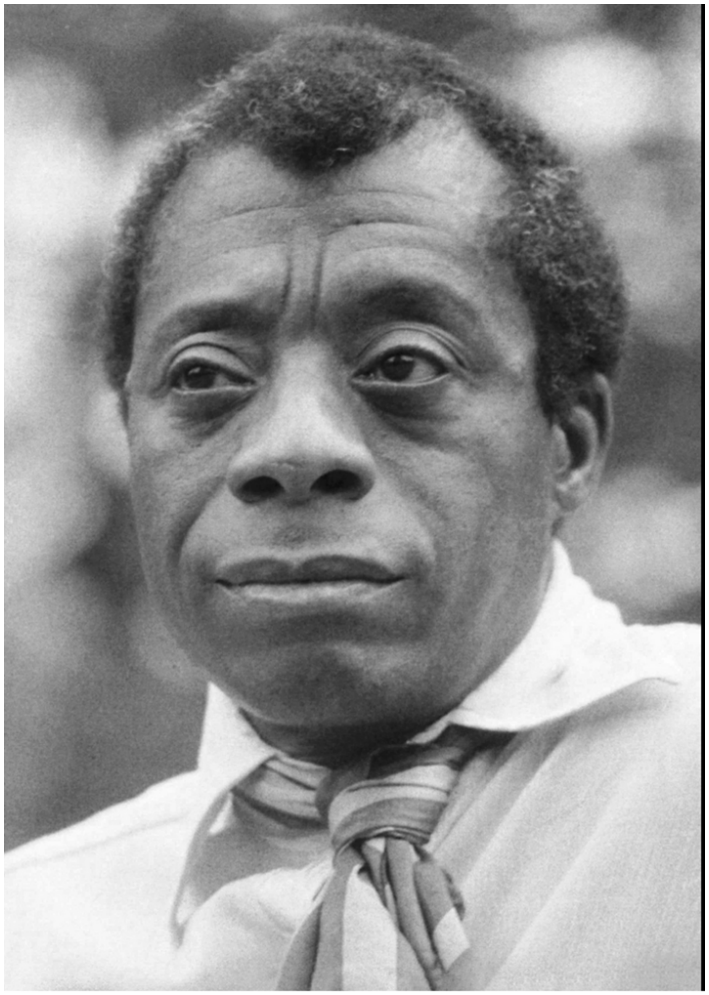

Figure 9: James Baldwin in 1969. Photo by Allan Warren. CC BY-SA 3.0. Baldwin (1924 – 1987) was an American writer and activist.

In higher education, Eurocentric epistemology is almost completely unchallenged. There are many things about Eurocentric epistemology that I like and that I think work to people's benefit. But it's not the only way of establishing knowledge and coming to the truth. For example, it's very difficult to do collaborative assessed work in higher ed, to do a group project. Yes, it will be allowed occasionally, but with transcripts of student achievement or the way that we structure dissertations if you go into graduate-level work, this is all done very much within a solo individual, scholarly paradigm. This extends into faculty work as well, where co-authored publications are not viewed as valuable as solo-authored publications; where if you want to do a team-teaching course, for budgetary reasons, you only get half a load or a third of the load, depending on how many people you're teaching with. Disciplines are silo'd, it's hard and a lot of work to get interdisciplinary courses off the ground.

Yet, the extra work associated with those is not rewarded. In fact, if an interdisciplinary course is team-taught, then you're penalized for that effort. The whole privileging of text, of the written word, of solo scholarship, of assessments being done individually, silo'd disciplines, team teaching being hard, sometimes arguing 'Well, in our discipline, we are engaged in a non-political search for truth'. The denial of any political project behind which disciplines get funded, the fact that STEM disciplines are disproportionately funded, is clearly a response to the desire by, again, rich white elites to have people schooled in these particular skill sets. It's a political choice, but it's presented as apolitical so that whole Eurocentric epistemology is pretty much unchallenged. It's very hard to get, for example – I've tried this myself in my own world – a collaboratively-authored doctoral thesis.

Then, just to finish up this long answer: the other thing that happens is that those with the real levers of power, who are the trustees or the governors that appoint the President, determine the strategic direction of a particular higher education institution in the United States. Their workings are completely secret to the whole community. It almost exists as if they don't exist. People think that the President of the institution is the one setting the policy, but they're not. The president serves at the appointment and pleasure of the Board of Trustees or the Board of Governors. They operate behind this cloak of secrecy. If you really want to get antiracism addressed, they have to come out and be part of a public conversation around it. I hardly ever see that happening.

You can do all these diversity and equity initiatives without changing Eurocentric epistemology or the power of the trustees or the Board of Governors, who are responsible for setting the direction and tone of the institution. You can do it and say you're anti-racist. But what you get rewarded for in terms of getting promoted, in terms of how you're appointed initially to a position, especially a faculty position, it's just the same old stuff: Eurocentric-epistemologically-determined, scholarly accomplishments such as solo authorship. You get tenure by racking up the number of books and articles that you've written on your own, at least in a Research One institution [so-called R1 or Doctoral Universities in the U.S., characterized by 'very high research activity'] that in itself is positioned as the most admired and rigorous higher education institution.

If you're a teaching institution in the United States, you're usually regarded as second, third or fourth tier. The ones that US News and World Report feature as the most prominent tend to be Ivy League, Big Ten universities and Research One universities, where you can be a terrible teacher. If you publish in refereed journals, then that's what brings you the status.

Anti-racist pedagogy is nested in a system, an institution, and an organizational culture. You can do your own individual stuff in a course or in a particular class, but unless you address the way the culture influences and frames what's going on and the structures that are in place, and the policies and the reward systems, unless you do that you're not really changing anything. It's kind of performative.

How can we teach about race?

JR: While engaged in teaching race, "white guilt is not the desired educational outcome" (Smith, 2018, p. 187). Klein (2018) emphasizes that the point of such a critical race pedagogy is "not to assign blame or wallow in guilt, but to critically assess normative assumptions and to free ourselves from racist social constructions so we can pursue education as the practice of freedom" (p. 89).

How can we come up with a series of sequenced stages to bring students into discussions where their identities come into question, particularly in predominantly White institutions? How can White teachers address the topic of race in ways that don't re-centre their power? To "paraphrase Marx's 11th thesis on Feuerbach", how can we not just understand how racism works but "seek to change it" (Brookfield & Hess, 2021, p. 40)?

SB: I'm going to break the question down and answer the three subsections in order. The first one is about bringing students into discussions and the sequence of stages: I have nine or ten things that I typically do in often the same sort of sequence, so I'll go through those. Of course, all of these change according to the specific context you find yourself in. But I think the first step, when you're getting ready to work with students, even before you meet them, is to reframe what counts as success, to try and lose your desire or your expectation to do it correctly or perfectly. This all goes back to that line I like to quote: 'There are two ways to do antiracist work: imperfectly or not at all'.

> ***There are two ways to do antiracist work: imperfectly or not at all.***

One of the things that demoralizes those of us going into this work early on is that we have this image of what a good workshop, course, training or meeting looks like when it's trying to incorporate issues of race into the discussion. But frequently, when we enact that practice, the reality is so far from our imagining that it gets very demoralizing because you have a false sense of how it looks to do the work well. This usually means that you can see a smooth upward trajectory in terms of people's understanding, that they get better at recognizing their assumptions about being aware when they're engaging in micro-aggressions. They start to raise race as an issue in class and outside, and things stay on an even keel emotionally. There's no awkward silence, and everybody participates roughly equally, offering the same amount of contributions.

So, that will be the first thing to get rid of: that set of expectations because it won't be like that. There will be a lot of emotions and a lot of strong feelings expressed; there will be long, awkward silences when people don't know what to say or whether to say what's on their minds. There will be expressions of frustration, anger, and sadness. Just remember that as you're going into this, it will not match some earlier experiences you've had teaching content where race is not involved.

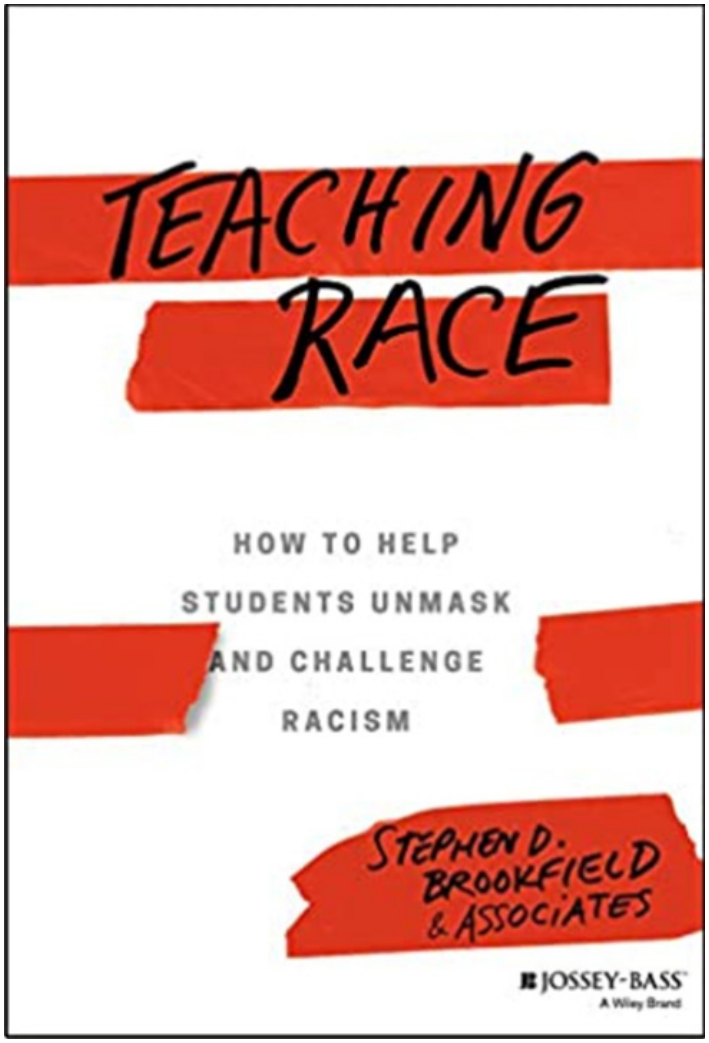

Figure 10: Book cover of *Teaching race* (Brookfield & Associates, 2018).

Then, when you've done that mental preparatory work and you meet with students for the first time, you have to do a lot of self-disclosure about your own racial identity, the role which race has played in your life, the struggle that you've had in terms of taking race seriously and understanding that if you're a white person and you have a white identity that really signifies something to the world. The first encounters with students should have a lot of narrative self-disclosure; you can't ask anybody to talk about racial experiences or issues until you've first done it publicly, several times. Then, when you start to enact a curriculum, conduct training, or run your task force meetings, it's always better if this is done as a team of facilitators who can model racial crosstalk. So whenever possible, I like to give students some early exposure to myself with at least one other colleague who comes hopefully from a different racial identity than my own. If students can see the two of us modeling, talking around race, leaving plenty of silence and talking about how we still struggle with these issues all the time, I think that is a very helpful tone-setting piece of modeling that facilitators can do.

Then I would bring in as a fourth step, some digital narratives, some contemporary examples that you find on YouTube or some other social media site – TikTok, Instagram, whatever it is – and you can get people to view some personal testimony about the nature of racism, and the effect that gives a central focus often at the beginning of a course or a workshop that people can begin to work from. So, instead of asking people to share their own narratives initially, I would probably be using a lot of digital narratives early on.

Next, I would constantly be taking the emotional temperature of how things were progressing: that ability to access students' experiences, to get accurate information on how they're experiencing, what's happening to them, the learning that's going on in groups, the way that they're interacting with each other, the way they're interacting with you, their reactions to the content. If you have regular information about how students are experiencing those things, then it just makes your choices much more grounded in reality than they otherwise would be.

Next, you have to introduce the concept of brave space – or if you don't use the brave space language, just alert students to the fact that when we engage in looking at race, particularly in a multiracial classroom, there will be all the things that I mentioned earlier: there will be long silences, there will be expressions of emotion, feelings, anger, sadness, and frustration. If students don't understand that stopping for a long time and nobody saying anything while they think it is quite normal – if they don't have that sense when they go into it, then they're constantly going to be feeling like, 'Well, the instructor doesn't know what they're doing, they've lost control, we're spiraling into the expression of emotions' and so on. You have to prepare students for the nature of racialized conversation; you can talk about potential ground rules and show examples. Again, I'd use a lot of digital examples of what racialized discussions will look like, which involve deep expressions of emotions and feelings.

The next thing you do is start considering when it might be good to split students up into racial affinity groups so that they have time to interact with others from their own racial identity. That stops a lot of the dangers we've already talked about when we have new multiracial groups talking about race. If it's people of color in one group, they can speak honestly about their own experiences of racism with each other in a way that they might be constrained about in a group comprising a lot of white students as well. In a mixed-racial identity group, one of the things that happens often is that white participants doubt the veracity of the expressions of racism that come from people of color. They're trying to talk them out of it and say they're too sensitive. 'That's really not what was going on' and so on. You don't have any of that if you're in a group with other people of color, plus you don't have white members trying to show you how they are allies or constantly asking you for information and advice and to teach them and to tell them what to do.

On the converse, in a white affinity group, if you don't have members of color, then the whole temptation to perform your wokeness for members of color is gone. You can really just talk about what whiteness means to each other in a more relaxed way than you would if it was a group which comprised multiple racial identities. I think the affinity group strategy is important to incorporate at various times. I don't mean that you keep people in those groups for the whole

class or the whole course. But I do think that a strategic use of how you group students into small group discussions around racial identities is important.

Then, when you get into classroom activities, I'm a very strong advocate of conversational protocols. Some of the ones that I use very frequently when I'm teaching in this area are Circle of Voices, Circular Response, the Chalk Talk approach, and an approach based on David Bohm's work, the theoretical physicist, that Steve Preskill and I in a book on discussion that we wrote call Bohmian Dialogue (see Brookfield & Preskill, 2012; 2016; Brookfield et al., 2024).

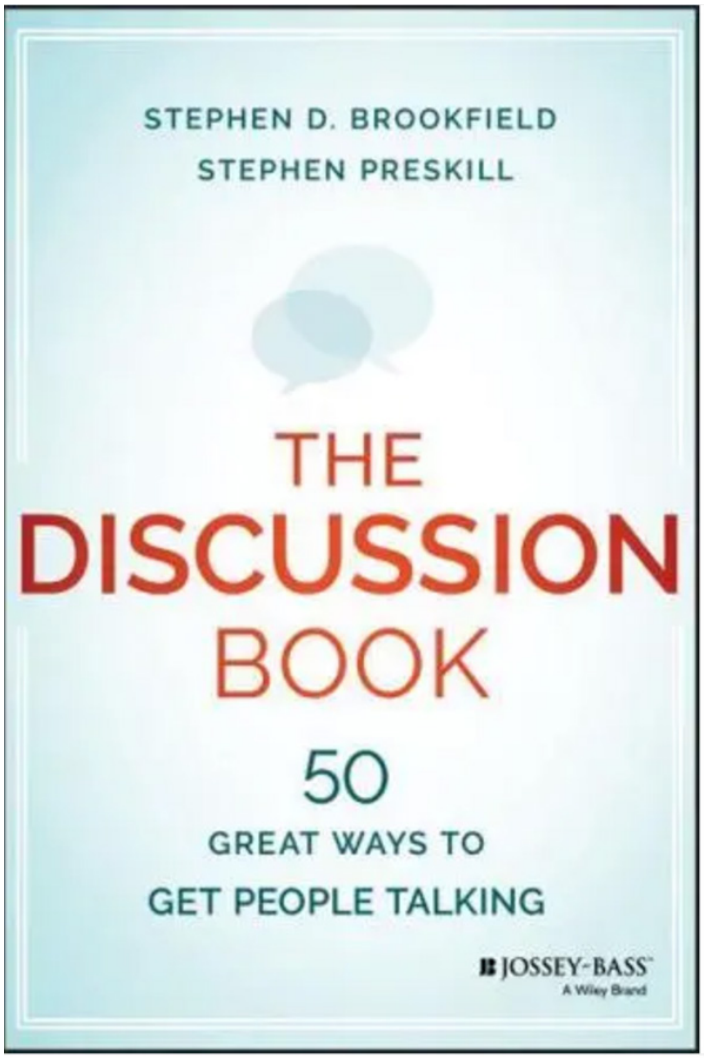

Figure 11. Book cover of *The discussion book* (Brookfield & Preskill, 2016).

I find that it's important as a teacher to set these protocols and explain the reasons for them, which usually are to slow things down, to give everybody a chance to think, to make sure that everybody has the opportunity to contribute at some point or another, to stop the power that students have because of their identity outside of the class just reproducing itself automatically inside, and to focus on raising questions and issues rather than coming up with specific answers or responses to problems. You constantly monitor what's going on by using backchannel chat, Slido, the Critical Incident Questionnaire or whatever classroom research device you want. You use all those things to monitor how things are going, and then you calibrate based on what you find out.

That would be the overall sequence of stages that I would employ in thinking about this. But having said that, some will be dropped, and some will be added, depending on context. But at least, as I go into a new situation, those are the things that are on my mind as design elements in terms of how I can sequence students' exposure to increasingly difficult ideas that threaten their sense of themselves as non-racist or anti-racist, 'good white people'.

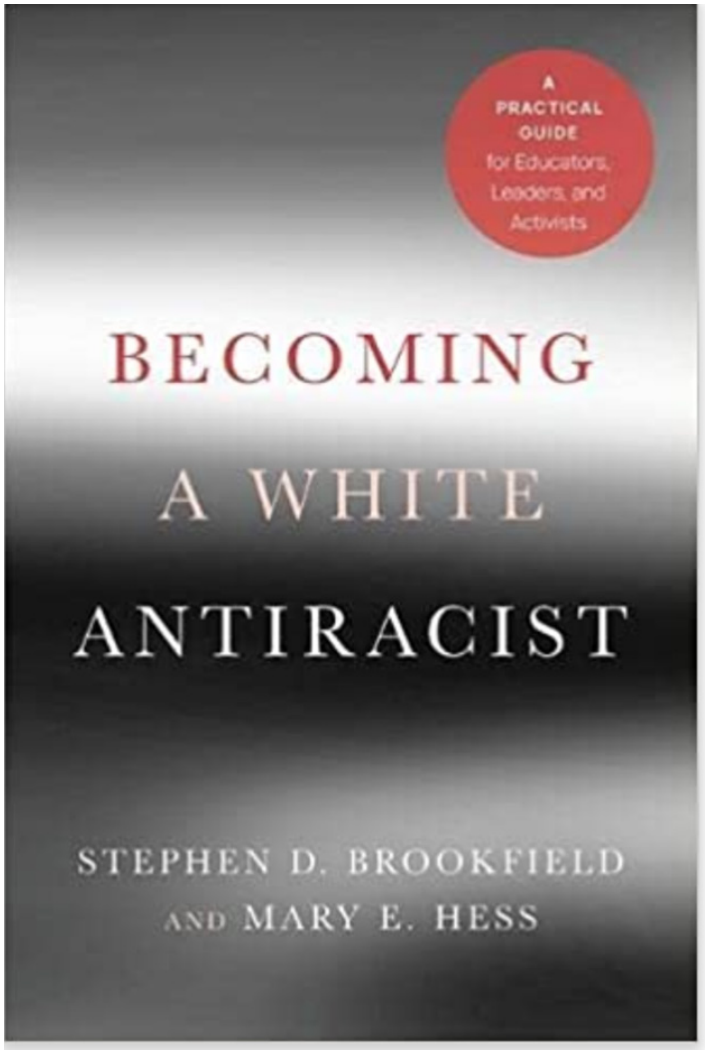

Figure 12: Book cover of Brookfield & Hess's *Becoming a white antiracist* (2021).

Second question: how can White teachers address the topic of race in ways that don't re-center their power? That is always a problem. Of course, as we know from my comments around power (see Brookfield et al., 2022, 2024), I don't pretend that teachers don't have power anymore because we do. But students do as well. For teachers, our question is: How do we use the power in a supportive, illuminating, and ethical way to help students' learning? One way that we can do that is by using a co-teaching model where the team comprises members who come from different racial backgrounds. Secondly, whenever you open yourself up to anonymous critique by all those classroom research approaches, Slido, CIQ [Critical Incident Questionnaire] etc., it opens your exercise of power to public questioning. When you report out comments that people have made, either questioning or supporting or challenging and condemning your use of power, when you talk about all that stuff as a public issue with a group, that helps create a dissent to your

power to some degree.

> ***I don't pretend that teachers don't have power anymore because we do typically. But students do as well. For teachers, our question is: How do we use the power in a supportive, illuminating, and ethical way to help students' learning?***

When white teachers use themselves as models of how they've learned racism and how they enact it, when we are the case study that we present to students, they see our own struggle and understand that we're constantly evolving and becoming and trying to get better at working in this area to understand the dynamics more fully and more accurately. I think that also using yourself as a case study of imperfection helps deconstruct your power as well.

Then the final sub-question: how can we not just understand racism but seek to change it? I do think that the first response I'm always considering is: 'What are the opportunities for us to act collectively? How do we build a network of people within the institution who are concerned about some institutional practices? If we're talking organizationally, how do we create alliances across different departments and different schools?'

At the university where I was employed, we had an anti-racist coalition of staff, students, lecturers and professors. It was about 250 people strong, drawn from every department, every unit or office in the university. Having that network meant that when the alliances wrote a letter to the president or when the alliance contacted the dean of a college about some policy or practice, it had some weight and authority behind it. Because you knew it was an organization that comprised 250 people and it would exercise collective leadership. The letter would speak on behalf of that big coalition.

Then, in the wider world, we know – at least it seems to me, that in order for a social movement to be more than a set of performative demonstrations, you really need some kind of political party or some organizational network: a permanent institution that is funded with permanent employees, and that focuses on the advancement of these issues. Setting up specific chapters of some national organization is the way, at least in the Civil Rights Movement, that change around race came. I still think that holds true very well. For example, the Black Lives Matter Movement has local affiliates, and the way it works looks different in Minneapolis than it does in New York City or Pensacola, Florida, or wherever.

The second thing on a more local level that I've emphasized a lot is if you don't have very much power and you are a junior member of the organization, always tie any project that you're pushing – any reform you're asking for, any new practice that you want to institute – tie all those things to the declared public mission of the institution or its value statement or its strategic plan or what it says it stands for. When you use the dominant language that's institutionally approved, and you couch the changes that you're suggesting or the issues that you're raising in that language, it's harder for institutions to wriggle out of taking it seriously. It also protects your own status because you are just asking: 'How can we do better live out the values that we say we're all about?' So, that's my kind of long, omnibus answer to your question, breaking them down into those three sub-questions.

ST: This sequence that you were describing, though, of course, context-dependent, strikes me as extremely clever. The term 'brave space' is very interesting, and it is, of course, different from a 'safe space'. This could be quite controversial in Jürgen's and my more Confucian environment in Singapore. But you're immediately mentioning an alternative approach where you alert the students to the thought process. I like the part about the racial affinity groups because that seems particularly non-threatening.

SB: It's interesting that with the affinity groups where my colleagues and I use this approach, we typically get a lot of pushback and resistance from the white members who say, 'How are we going to learn about race if we're not talking to people of color about their racialized experiences?' I think that's a legitimate question to raise. But it then allows us to say: 'Well, in a white group, we can focus specifically on what it means to have a white racial identity. We can talk about our own sense of ourselves as having a racial identity or our own growing understanding of these issues. We can talk about all of these things in a way that it would be harder for us to do were we in a group with folks of color'. So, it's not as if affinity groups are usually welcomed. There's a lot of confusion about why we are doing this and how we will ever move forward if we don't talk about our differences and have a conversation around that. So, we say: 'Well, we're not saying 'don't do that', we're just saying that for some of the time, for some specific purposes, it's helpful to be in a racial affinity group'.

But that's something I should probably stress as well: when you do this as a white instructor with white students who are in a multiracial class environment, the white students will often resist it, and they'll have a hard time understanding why this is happening. But usually, when you then debrief the small group experiences in racial affinity groups, the members of color in their groups will talk about how refreshing it was to just meet with those of their own racial identity, to be able to relax, and not worry about how Whites are going to react to comments. I remember one group saying in a training we set up: 'We didn't have to massage white egos'. When people of color brought up an issue of race in this particular institution, Whites would become so alarmed because their notion of a 'good white person' was being challenged, and they would spend a lot of time defending themselves and trying to explain their conduct or their thinking. The people of color were always having to calculate: 'Well, how do we introduce this without making people feel threatened? How do we do it in a nice way?' 'My own future in this institution maybe is on the line if I'm too confrontational'. All those calculations for a person of color are much less important when you're in a group of others who are drawn from a similar racial background. So, hopefully, the white students hear those kinds of comments and feedback and get a better sense of why we're doing it. But it's often resisted earlier on.

Dealing with our own biases and stereotypical actions in the classroom

JR: In an article in 2014, you wrote, "In classes, I catch myself not challenging students of color and realize my so-called empathy, desire to be an ally, masks an embedded racist consciousness, which says, 'They can't take a strong challenge from a white person'" (Brookfield, 2014, p. 91). Could you discuss the circumstances where you realised your own biases and stereotypical actions? Are these related to being a 'good white person'?

SB: I have so many examples of circumstances where I've realized, and I'm continuing to realize, my own biases and stereotypical actions. One of the most important events was way back in the early 1980s when I started teaching at Columbia University's Teachers College in New York. There was one particular African American woman who came up to me after a class one day and said: 'Do you realize that when I speak, you never say anything, you just nod? I don't know what that means. Do you not say something because you don't understand what I'm saying? Is it too difficult to comprehend? Or is what I'm saying irrelevant, so you can't really connect it to what we're talking about?' She pointed out to me my tendency to stay silent. As your question suggests, that was an example of where I felt that Whites have had the stage for too long. I shouldn't allow my voice to be too dominant. In particular, if a student of color said something that I disagreed with, I felt like I couldn't really express that disagreement because that seemed like we were reestablishing power relations based on race. I assumed I would be acting in an authoritarian way and demonstrating that I'm not taking their experiences seriously. So, I concluded that I'd better not challenge even though I feel there's something inaccurate or misconceived about this particular contribution that someone's made.

I did a lot of that hanging back. It was because of students like the woman that I quoted – this was 40 years ago – that that really stuck with me. Then I remember, also in the '80s, someone came to me and said, 'There's some racism going on in the class between students; you need to deal with it'. And I said, 'No, that's not really my concern. These are all adult students; they can sort it out amongst themselves'. I deliberately evaded the emotional effort of dealing with a situation that I felt like I was not really qualified to deal with. I also had a history of deflecting the need to take race seriously before I started to understand the dynamics of power based on racial identities that played themselves out in classrooms and meetings. Eventually, I gave permission for my students or my colleagues to talk about those dynamics by, first of all, modeling and talking about them myself. People would say things to me that were quite disturbing. They would point out my microaggressions.

There was one where I was running a classroom discussion. I asked everybody to participate and give their opinions on the issue we were discussing. Everybody did, and then I started to sum up and pointed out similarities and differences in the comments. One of the white female students raised her hand and said: 'We haven't heard from another person in the group' who was a younger Asian-American woman. I couldn't believe that I had overlooked her. So, I apologized and asked her to speak, and then over the break in the class, I was thinking to myself: 'How did I overlook her? I was sure everyone had spoken'. I realized it was a good example of microaggression, where you do something by not calling on a student. You make them feel invisible and ignored and not of value to you.

I went back to the group after the break and said: 'I think you just saw a really good example of a microaggression because I didn't mean to exclude this student. It just happened'. When something 'just happens' and seems natural and normal, and you're not even aware of what's gone on, those are the times in which dominant ideology is very prevalent. In this case, I really had no idea that I'd excluded someone, an Asian American woman. Then, some white students spoke up and said: 'Oh, you just had a moment of forgetfulness, don't punish yourself'. But then the Asian student spoke up and said: 'This has happened pretty much in every course I've taken at the university. I have felt constantly overlooked like no one is really interested in my opinion, and I don't think people really notice that I'm in the room'. I use that example a lot of something that happens all the time.

I know that I meet male gazes more easily than female gazes, I make eye contact with men more than with women, I tend to know the male names more than I know the female names, I tend to know white students' names or be more comfortable speaking them than some students of color where their names are just phonetically unfamiliar or difficult for me to pronounce. So, in order to avoid the embarrassment of pronouncing them wrongly, I don't call on the student because then I'd have to use that name. In all these little ways, in these micro-decisions you make in the middle of a class or meeting, you see your learned racism and this notion of 'well, the only important students really are the white students'. I'm horrified to think that I might believe that, but my actions sort of support that learned perception that comes from white supremacy.

That whole notion of a good white person has been incredibly influential on me, and I do credit Shannon Sullivan's Good white people, which was published in 2014. That was really influential on me, I read it and recognized a lot of what she was talking about in myself. I realized that this desire to be a good white person is part and parcel of white identity development. It's one of the things that happened earlier, probably in your development as a racialized person. If you're white, you cling to this idea that you're not one of the bad white people enacting racism. You're one of the good ones who somehow escaped it. You treat everybody the same irrespective of their racial background or the pigmentation of their skin. That awareness of being a 'good white person' has helped me understand the limits of a colorblind perspective; it's helped me understand the dangers of white 'saviorism' and a colonial approach where it's your responsibility to fix the problems of other people. This constant desire to prove how anti-racist you are to colleagues and students of color is all part of the good white person's identity.

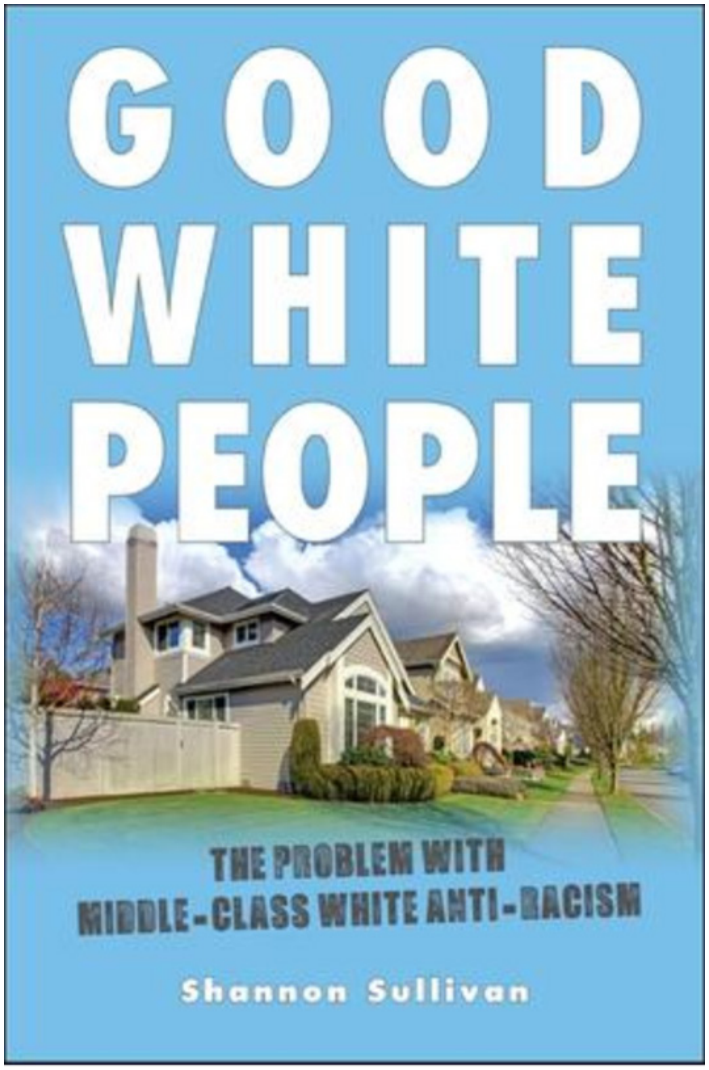

Figure 13: Book cover of Sullivan (2014).

That awareness of being a 'good white person' has helped me understand the limits of a colorblind perspective; it's helped me understand the dangers of white 'saviorism' and a colonial approach where it's your responsibility to fix the problems of other people.

If I didn't have several anonymous backchannels where students can point out things that they've noticed in Slido, backchannel chat and in the Critical Incident Questionnaire, it would be a lot harder for me to understand what was going on. So, that anonymous student's commentary and critique has also been really helpful over the years and students have said things about my own actions and my own words or decisions and choices in class. I've had to acknowledge that there's a great deal of truth in things that they've pointed out to me regarding my own behavior and view and that is an opportunity to model the kind of appropriate disclosure that you really need to do a lot of.

How do we manage microaggressions and racism in a classroom setting?

ST: Would you like to further comment on the concept of microaggressions? In *Teaching race* (Brookfield & Associates, 2018), *The skillful teacher* (Brookfield, 2015) and other works, you highlight the usefulness of the concept of microaggressions. You wrote: "One of the most useful concepts I've stumbled across in the last few years has been that of racial micro-aggressions… [–] small acts of exclusion and marginalization committed by a dominant group toward a minority" (Brookfield, 2015, p. 119). Microaggressions are at the level of everyday behaviour that enacts the ideology of white supremacy and keeps racist systems in place. Microaggressions are defined as "daily verbal, behavioural, and environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative racial, gender, sexual orientation, and religious slights and insults to the target person or group" (Sue, 2010, p. 5). Could you please share some examples from inside and outside of the classroom when you have witnessed, experienced, or enacted racial microaggressions?

SB: I've already dealt with that to some degree with the last question. I will add one, which is a dynamic that plays itself out over and over again in a mixed-race group: where a person of color points out some questionable comment that a white person has made, or a person of color or I point out how a particular action that someone has taken does have some embedded racism or white supremacy contained within it. When that happens, the other white members of the group will band together to save the white person whose behavior or comments are being questioned. I've seen this over and over again, where they'll say: 'Don't be so hard on him; he had a moment of forgetfulness, or he had a rough week'. Or: 'Not everything is about race; his actions have nothing to do with race'.

I've seen this happen in student groups, faculty groups, and in meetings of administrators where the other Whites have this informal pact to save a white person and explain away their behavior when a person of color identifies anything problematic. I try to name when that is happening, and I try to point out that it constitutes a micro-aggression. Your first response should not be to explain it away, justify your actions, and re-explain your real intent.

The first response is to acknowledge the harm that the other person feels has been caused. You don't try to deny or mitigate that harm by saying, 'Well, it wasn't really meant; you're being too sensitive'; you just let that person know that you hear what they're saying. Then, you apologize for the harm and take responsibility for it. Then maybe you can get to talking about what your intention was. But you don't start off by explaining your intention; you start off by acknowledging the harm and apologizing for your role in it. It's a pretty simple thing to say, and it is a very hard thing to do. Because Whites have this horror of being regarded as racist in any way. It all comes from this model of racism as something that's rooted in our individual psyche. That's why early on when you're talking about racism with a new group, you have to make sure, as best you can, that you're moving away from this individual understanding of it in terms of

your own individual moral failings and that you understand it as something that's systemically enacted, something that everybody learns and internalizes to a greater or lesser degree.

When I've been co-teaching with colleagues of color, when we finished our presentation or we've just done an activity, we ask people to debrief. Who did the questions go to? Do they go to me as the white male, so-called senior teaching member of the group, or do they go to the person of color or the woman? In most white spaces, it's typically clear that the questions tend to come to me because I'm assumed to have more authority and credibility in the teaching team. A lot of that is linked to my racial identity, and it's also linked to my gender identity. When that happens, we can point out as a teaching team that dynamic about how authority subconsciously is viewed as white and male, and that if someone has a white male body, they are assumed to contain more intelligence, have more credibility and be more competent.

Those are some of the typical dynamics that I've seen. Some of the things that I've done myself is to ask someone, 'Where are you from?' You see a student in class, and you assume that because they're not white, they're fairly recent immigrants. So, you ask, 'Where are you from?' and they'll say, 'Chicago' or 'Boise, Idaho'. Asking 'Where are you from?' implies that you're not from the United States. It just emphasizes the otherness, 'This is not a real American here'. 'This is an immigrant'. I should be particularly aware of that, given that I'm an immigrant myself, but I think my whiteness blinds me to the underlying message of that question that I have asked, 'Where are you from?' In my head, I'm just expressing simple curiosity, but of course, to the receiver, it's seen as, 'All right, you're not American, are you?' What other country or culture outside of this one do you come from?' Those are some examples of microaggressions and how I've tried to deal with them: acknowledge, apologize, take responsibility, and explain intent. I think the final typical stage when you're becoming aware that you've committed a microaggression is that you talk about how you're going to take account of what you've just learned and try to avoid replicating that behavior in the future. That's a final thing that we often teach you to do.

JR: How do you manage quite overt racism and white supremacy in a classroom setting? It's not just a microaggression but something a lot more blatant.

SB: I think you have to point it out. One of the things that students of color have made very clear to me as a white teacher: they've told me that if I let stuff go unchallenged such as a racist comment that somebody has said or posted on Slido, I have to acknowledge it. Students tell me that if I don't acknowledge what is going on and tell them how I'm going to try to address it, then they really don't have any respect for me. It's very hard for me to trust my own commitment to antiracism. Even though I'm a non-confrontational person by cultural training, I know from experience that when an overt expression of racism or white supremacy happens, I have to acknowledge it right then and there at the moment and bring it to the attention of everyone and talk about it. However, the way I respond to that will partly depend on my reading of the context because if I'm saying we all have racism within us, it will be no surprise when it comes out. In fact, it would counter my own understanding of racism to always jump on that and say, 'bad white person'.

Figure 14: Screenshot of an announcement regarding the use of Slido during an intensive weekend seminar. *Learning as a way of leading* (see Preskill & Brookfield, 2009) was co-taught by Stephen Brookfield and Stephen Preskill in May 2022 at Columbia University's Teachers College.

One of the things I'll often do is when I hear or see something, I'll say, 'I think what you just talked about is a really helpful example of learned white supremacy or learned racism'. Sometimes, I'll say, 'How would you feel if that comment was directed at you yourself, based on your racial identity?' Sometimes I'll say, 'Let's just stop for a moment. How do you think that comment was heard by people of color in this class, or how do you think that comment would be heard outside of this class by a stranger or by a person of color that you knew?'

Another approach I'll often enact is to say: 'What you've just said sounds so much like me. I remember thinking that and saying that and doing that. Then, what gave me pause and made me understand that there may be some racism embedded within it was such and such'. Using myself as a case study or an example sometimes takes the pressure off the person whose behavior has been identified and pointed out. When I'm doing this, I always try to give an example of a different formulation of words or how a question might have been posed that would have felt like a less racist or micro-aggressive kind of comment or question.

But if something really overt happens, like an attempt to shut someone down or to belittle them because of their racial identity, then you just have to name that and say that's not acceptable. 'That is not what we're about in this class and I have fairly precise participation grading rubrics that I use. A comment like that would clearly be a contravention or contradiction of a lot of the ground rules that I or the group have developed as examples of good participation. So, you can point that out. Sometimes I've just said 'I really feel that's an example of the worst kind of racism that we have to deal with. And while you might not have meant it that way, it constitutes racial stereotyping and dismissal'. Racial stereotyping is very common, and you just have to sometimes be very explicit in pointing out what's going on.

Developing an antiracist white identity

ST: You wrote: "I came to understand that education about racism was often done best through narrative disclosure" – and you've spoken about that, of course, already – "not just through sharing tips and techniques of what does, or doesn't, work in confronting racism" (Brookfield, 2015, p. 113). Could you elaborate on how self-disclosure helps people develop an antiracist white identity?

SB: I have seen a certain dynamic play itself out in quite a bit of antiracist training over the years. That is where often a white person will come in and present themselves as a fully-formed white antiracist, whose job it is to enlighten other people who are earlier in that journey and then to go straight into the teaching or the training around antiracism. I always feel like that's a fundamental mistake: that if you come in, the first thing you as a facilitator have to do is to model your own experiences of racism, the times when you've enacted racism. So, give lots of examples from your own life and emphasize that this is something that you're still struggling with. Coming in as a living example of someone who's still trying to learn about this and who is not at the end of their journey by any means sets a tone for a workshop for other Whites who might be afraid of admitting to anything that is not politically correct or an example of a fully formed anti-racist person.

If you just come in and talk about how you, as the facilitator or teacher, are just as ensnared in the system as anybody else – that I think is a helpful way of opening people up and setting a tone. I'm always trying to give examples of actions I've taken, decisions I've made or things that I've said. I have learned a certain way of understanding the world, that was internalized very early on, supported throughout my teenage and adult years, meaning that racism and white supremacy are just baked into the cake of daily life (I'm not sure that's a very good metaphor). They're basically learned; you're not born thinking these things. But if you're in a white supremacist culture, it would be crazy not to have some of that within you or to feel that you had somehow escaped it by a fierce moral commitment not to be racist. I'm always trying to use the example of my own narratives to teach people that racism is something that's structural, that it's internalized, and that everyday institutional practices and policies support – without us knowing it – the ideas of white supremacy.

Let's move away from this racism-as-an-individual-moral-failing model and see instead racism as something that's culturally learned. If you can get that understanding across at some basic level, people find it easier to deal with this. Because you're now not blaming individuals for their moral failings, you're just saying: 'Of course, it would be very strange if you didn't think or act this way, given the culture that you've grown up in'. Also, you have more success in getting people to develop an antiracist white identity and even to understand what being a white person means if you start off with narratives rather than statistics or theories. I've seen a lot of workshops start off with tables, representing massive inequities of access to health care or education, or disproportionately high numbers of inmates of color in penal institutions. Those are obviously important.

However, what engages people initially is a story that they recognize, and they can place themselves in that story and think, 'Yeah, I've done something like that or close to that, or I can see how I would do that in that situation'. When you use your examples from your own narrative experience, it connects with people in a way that statistics or fierce polemic about the need to be antiracist doesn't. I feel that you should bring in the stats and the studies after there has been some initial narrative disclosure. You're going to have more success in developing an antiracist identity in that way if you start talking in personal terms rather than in general or abstract terms. Finally, given that this work is strongly emotional, having a model of someone who's in the role of facilitator or leader talk about their own emotional responses and their own confusion, fatigue and frustration, is a very helpful way of bringing people around to thinking through: What does it mean to have a white identity? What does it mean to have an antiracist identity?

'Failing well' in antiracist workshops

JR: We were surprised to learn that you conduct antiracist workshops for participants whose attendance is compulsory, so they may not be there out of their own free will. Could you share the reasons why you expose yourself to such (presumably at least partially painful) experiences and share some of them with us?

SB: It's a question that most people who are involved in staff training, faculty development, or professional development ask themselves: Should this be mandatory or voluntary? Of course, when that kind of training is voluntary, you tend to preach to the choir of selected individuals who see the importance and the necessity of the work. I'm somebody who's done a lot of that kind of development myself. One part of me says: 'It was great that these people are here, and it's important that they are fueled in that desire to be good teachers and that they see there are others in the institution who share their passion and desire for improvement. They need support.' But I'm always thinking, 'These are not really the people that should be here'. The people who should be here are those who dismiss the notion that there is anything to improve in their practice and who feel that any kind of challenge to their ideas or habitual ways of acting is disrespectful in some way to them. If you think about how change happens institutionally or organizationally, it's

always a collective change.

Selected individuals, a new president or a new principal of a school can set a tone. But ultimately, if an institution is going to change, it has to have some collective engagement in intentional change across the whole institution. So, that's why I feel that sometimes we need to have mandatory training. It is a very different dynamic because there'll be a lot of skepticism and anger in the room. There'll be attempts to sabotage what's going on by calling your credibility into question, and there'll be constant dismissing of your authority. But when you're confronting people with a picture of the world that's 180 degrees different from the one that they thought they were walking in every day, then you have to expect that you get all those forms of pushback and resistance when you mandate it. But it's important to remember that when people respond that way, criticize you and call your authority into question, you shouldn't take it personally. It feels like it's personal, but whoever was running that mandatory education or training effort would have the same criticisms levelled at them. It doesn't matter who's doing it on one level and who's in charge of it because just the instigator of that antiracist education is going to be seen as the enemy by a lot of people. It just comes with the territory. You have to try to depersonalize all this criticism and realize it's not directed at you personally.

This is one of the benefits of doing it as part of a team. When you have team-facilitating mandatory training, you have built-in support there from your team members who can tell you you're not crazy and who can point out good things that happened when you felt you failed miserably. They can give you a different reading of how a meeting went or point out things you hadn't noticed in a classroom. Then, if you really have got into a difficult situation, usually the team members can talk about how they have been in exactly the same situation, help talk you down, and talk you through it. Doing mandatory training on your own consistently can be pretty wearing and demoralizing. So, it's another reason why I am always going for the team approach.

ST: You provided an excellent quote earlier: that you can do this kind of antiracism training or education either imperfectly or not at all. Our next question is along the same lines: What does being successful in teaching race mean? Is the best possible outcome to 'fail well' (to cite Samuel Beckett)? Could you elaborate on some of the most important misperceptions that block white teachers' efforts to do antiracist work? In *Teaching race*, you discussed the following eight avoidable mistakes: 'I can control what happens', 'I need to stay calm', 'I must fix racism and transform my students', 'I've finally escaped racism', 'I understand your pain', 'Please confess your racism', 'I mustn't dominate, so I'll stay silent', and 'I'm your ally'.

SB: Again, I'll break these down, taking each of the sub-questions that you raise. You start off with: 'What does being successful in teaching race mean?' I've already talked a lot about how we have to readjust our notion of what success looks like in this work. Unless we do that, we're going to feel constantly as if we're incompetent and we have no idea what we're doing. You'll start to doubt yourself. So, you have to understand that success is not all the things we talked about:

Figure 15. Photo of Samuel Beckett in 1977 by Roger Pic, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, public domain. Failure is a central theme in Samuel Beckett's oeuvre. A famous passage from *Worstward ho* (Beckett, 1989, p. 101) reads: "Ever tried. Ever failed. No matter. Try Again. Fail again. Fail better."

staying calm, coming to consensus, leaving a classroom, feeling everybody has had their perspective transformed, or avoiding upsetting expressions of emotion. We have to leave all that behind. For me, I start thinking about whether people are willing to come back and continue the conversation. That is the key criterion of success that I use: whether or not someone is willing to keep talking about this or keep trying to push back against institutional practices and try out new policies and new ways of admitting students, assessing students' learning, or appointing and promoting people with institutions. If we're still willing to continue talking and acting in that way, then that is just success in itself.

A lot of this what we're facing is really a Eurocentric viewpoint, privileges perfection and seeks constantly for the correct way to do things. It's a constant binary emphasis you sometimes see in Western thought: 'There are best practices, and there are worst practices'. 'There are effective criteria or effective approaches, and then there are ineffective approaches'. That Eurocentric epistemology really does get in the way. You just got to start thinking about, 'Well, I'm going to do it imperfectly or not at all, and those are your only two options'. Having this Eurocentric notion that I can become a really good, certified trainer of this who is mistake-free or a certified teacher in this area is just the wrong way of thinking about it. Because, quoting Beckett, you will 'fail' if that's how you are assessing the effectiveness of your work. In my own experience, I always want to go back and do a particular session or training over again. I've realized, after a lot of years, that that's just the nature of the work. I will

always feel like 'I could have done that better. Man, I wish I'd said this or done that at that particular point'. And I'll say to myself, 'I really missed an opportunity there'. But I just have to understand that this is so complex that it's always going to be part and parcel of the work. The most you can do is to understand better why the particular dynamics that you were dealing with were in play.

In terms of some of the most important misperceptions, we have talked about some. But I'll just say something briefly on some of these. The 'I can control what happens'. Well, you can't; you can plan, you can learn from experience, and you can go in with the sort of sequence that I outlined earlier. But one thing you can depend on is that something is going to take you by surprise; some new dynamic or some new manifestation of an old dynamic is going to emerge. You just need to be prepared, knowing that that is almost certainly going to happen, and not feel uncomfortable by calibrating and changing plans in midstream, by being flexible, and by adjusting to what you're learning about a group. I think if you just talk out loud about that process of decision-making and how you're interpreting what's going on in the class, that constitutes a good model of a critically reflective and responsive practitioner.

This emphasis on keeping calm: 'I need to keep things calm, I need to stay calm' is what Bell Hooks (2014) called "bourgeois decorum" as the model of conversation in higher education classrooms. But racial discussions won't stay calm, there will be raised voices and tears and expressions of anger and heated conversation, lots of awkward silences. But the silence is often just a necessary pause for people to process and mull over some very complex information or ideas that they just encountered. So, all that stuff is normal, it's not a sign that things have gone off the rails or gone wrong. That's something again that a lot of my colleagues, plus myself, have had a hard time understanding because we would like everything to work out the way that we've anticipated. When it doesn't, it's so easy to think, 'Oh, I've lost the plot. I've got it wrong. I haven't planned properly, and I'm an imposter. I don't deserve to be doing the work'.

It's easy to slip as a white teacher into this role of thinking, 'Well, I am the racially cognizant one. I'm going to bring the rest of you unenlightened, unsophisticated people into a more enlightened state of being'. If you have that attitude, people pick that up very quickly. It really puts them off. Plus, it takes a long time to have a significant personal change. It's not something where you go to a workshop, and you say, 'Oh wow, there's this whole other way of living'. Then from that point onward, you're engaged in this other way of living, according to this completely different paradigm of how the world works. It doesn't happen like that. It's a lot of halting moves forward and then regression to earlier behaviors and then moving forward again when you feel you have a bit more courage, then regressing again when things are difficult.

Saying something like, 'I finally escaped racism' is all to do with presenting yourself as a fully formed antiracist. But no one has escaped racism. People have done better and may be aware of how racist practices and instincts are shaping the decisions and actions in their lives. But they haven't escaped it because the system is so deep and endemic. They might be able to negotiate their way within it. But they will never have escaped it. So, even as you're challenging the ideas of white supremacy, it's still going to be an important framework that's determining your actions.

Figure 16. Gloria Jean Watkins, better known as Bell Hooks (1952 – 2021), at the New School, 10 October 2014; photo by Alex Lozupone; CC BY-SA 4.0. Renowned for her insights on race, feminism, and class, Bell Hooks served as a Distinguished Professor at Berea College. She authored around 40 influential books, including essays, poetry, and children's books, delving into the intersection of race, capitalism, and gender, and their role in sustaining oppression and class domination.

No one has escaped racism.

'I understand your pain' - I've seen this spoken by white students in multiracial groups as a response to an expression of being on the receiving end of racism that comes from a member of color in the group. The whites will often try and say: 'I know what you're experiencing and where you're coming from. I was in this situation once in my life, people laughed at me because of my working-class accent, and I was considered unintelligent because of the way that I spoke. Usually, attempts by Whites to say, 'I understand your pain' by drawing a connection between experiences of racism and their own experiences do not go well. It sounds to people of color that you're trying to diminish their own experiences.

I do feel that when you're looking at processes of marginalization, it is appropriate to make a link between the way that you as a white person have felt marginalized, or the way that you as a woman or a trans-person have been marginalized. I do understand that is one way of talking about this dynamic within a mostly white group. But it's a major mistake for Whites to say, 'I understand what it's like to be on the receiving end of sustained racism every day of your life' because we can't really understand that.

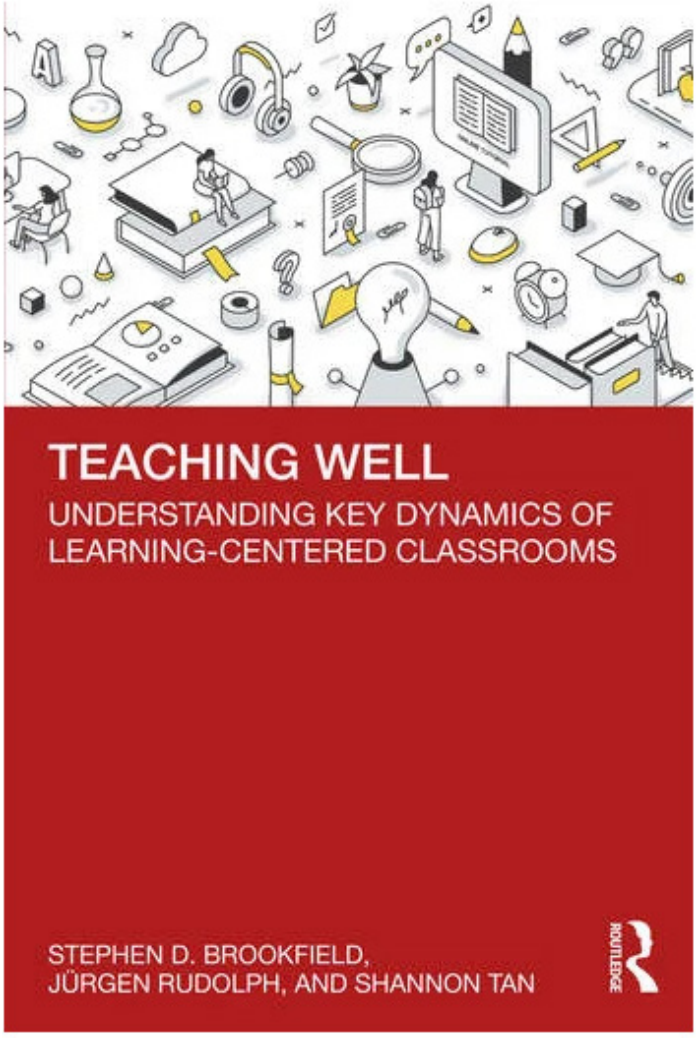

Figure 17. Our book on teaching well (Brookfield et al., 2024). This interview is a significantly expanded version of Chapter 9. For reviews of the book, see Xhemaili (2023), O'Brien (2024), Waring (2024) and Day (2024).

The 'confessing your racism' dynamic is where you're running a class or doing a training that's supposed to make people antiracist and participants will spend a lot of time confessing to their past sins of racism. They'll use those confessions as a sign of how woke they now are. While, again, I've argued constantly that it's important that people express their own narratives and talk about their own stories and their own experiences, you have to make, as an educator, leader, or trainer, sure that confessing to those experiences doesn't dominate the whole workshop – where white students are in effect turning to students of color and saying: 'Please absolve me from my sin [all laugh]. Please tell me I'm a good white person. And tell me 'No, that was you in the past, but you're not like that anymore', 'We consider you an ally.' and so on.

One of the things that I hear a lot from white students or white colleagues is essentially: 'Well, I can't really contribute to this. I certainly can't exercise any leadership in this area because I have no experience of race. I don't know what it's like to be on the receiving end of sustained racism every day of your life'. That's clearly accurate. But I always say to a white group: 'Well, yes, you don't have that experience of racism, but you do have an enormous experience of race from the perspective of an unconscious enactor of it, someone who knows how these ideas are transmitted and learned'. Also, as someone who knows how easy it is to move through institutions and communities and families every day and not to be aware of the racism that is favoring and advantaging you in some way. If you assume that you can't do any leadership on this because you don't have a racial identity, that race is something only people of color have, that you haven't been the recipient of all these racist policies – well, I will say: 'You actually have been the recipient of racist policies, but what you've experienced on the receiving end is a removal of barriers. Because you don't have these barriers and these stereotypes weighing down on you, you'll never have to think about them. So, please don't feel that you don't have an experience of race. You do. It's just from a very different perspective. The more you come to understand that your white identity is the norm for what correct thinking or correct behavior or normal, universal behavioral thinking looks like, and the more you understand how that's happening, the more you're able to teach about the dynamics of white supremacy'.

The final thing is not to go around saying 'I'm your ally', or 'I want to be your ally'. Act as if you are, try and do that. But don't announce it because that's a very performative act. Really, you're looking for absolution, and you're looking for evidence that you're a good white person and that you're not a racist. I'll always say, 'Well, yeah, it's good to understand what it means to act as an ally or an accomplice or a co-conspirator, particularly in movements or in specific projects run by folks of color'. So, be an ally, but don't declare it as a self-identifier. Because then you will not be taken seriously in my experience by the folks of color that you're working with. However, if someone calls you that, then you should feel justifiably honored – but don't come in saying that you are; it's a fundamental mistake.

JR: Thank you so much for the interview, Stephen!

Acknowledgement

We thank Dr Begüm Burak for her excellent transcription of the interview.

References

Barnett, P. E. (2018). Building trust and negotiating conflict when teaching race. In S. D. Brookfield & Associates (2018). *Teaching race: How to help students unmask and challenge racism* (pp. 109-130). Jossey Bass.

Beckett, S. (1989). *Nohow on*. John Calder.

Bell, D. A. (1995). Who's afraid of critical race theory? *University of Illinois Law Review*, 893.

Brookfield, S. D. (2005). *The power of critical theory: Liberating adult learning and teaching*. Jossey-Bass.

Brookfield, S. D. (2014). Teaching our own racism: Incorporating personal narratives of whiteness into anti-racist practice. *Adult Learning, 25*(3), 89-95.

Brookfield, S. D. (2015). *The skillful teacher: On technique, trust, and responsiveness in the classroom*. John Wiley & Sons.

Brookfield, S. D. (2017). *Becoming a critically reflective teacher* (2nd ed). John Wiley and Sons.

Brookfield, S. D. (2018). The dynamics of teaching race. In S. D. Brookfield & Associates (2018). *Teaching race: How to help students unmask and challenge racism* (pp. 1-17). Jossey Bass.

Brookfield, S. D. (2023). Foreword. In A. Darder, C. Hayes II, & H. Ryan (Eds.), *On class, race, and educational reform: Contested perspectives* (pp. xvii-xxi). Bloomsbury Academic.

Brookfield, S. D., & Associates. (2018). *Teaching race: How to help students unmask and challenge racism*. Jossey Bass.

Brookfield, S. D., & Hess, M. E. (2021). *Becoming a white antiracist: A practical guide for educators, leaders, and activists*. Stylus.

Brookfield, S. D., & Holst, J. D. (2010). *Radicalizing learning: Adult education for a just world*. John Wiley & Sons.

Brookfield, S. D., & Preskill, S. (2012). *Discussion as a way of teaching: Tools and techniques for democratic classrooms*. John Wiley & Sons.

Brookfield, S. D., & Preskill, S. (2016). *The discussion book: 50 great ways to get people talking*. John Wiley & Sons.

Brookfield, S. D., Rudolph, J., & Tan, S. (2022). Powerful teaching, the paradox of empowerment and the powers of Foucault. An interview with Professor Stephen Brookfield. *Journal of Applied Learning and Teaching, 5*(1), 131-145. https://doi.org/10.37074/jalt.2022.5.1.12

Brookfield, S. D., Rudolph, J., & Tan, S. (2024). *Teaching well: Understanding key dynamics of learning-centered classrooms*. Routledge.

Brookfield, S. D., Rudolph, J., & Yeo, E. (2019). The power of critical thinking in learning and teaching. An interview with Professor Stephen D. Brookfield. *Journal of Applied Learning and Teaching, 2*(2), 76-90. https://doi.org/10.37074/jalt.2019.2.2.11

Colin III, S. A. J., Sheared, V., Johnson-Bailey, J., & Brookfield, S. D. (2010). Epilogue. Implications for curriculum, programming, and research. In V. Sheared, J. Johnson-Bailey, E. Peterson, S. A. Colin III, S. D. Brookfield & Associates (2010). *The handbook of race and adult education: A resource for dialogue on racism* (pp. 343-374). Jossey Bass.

Cunningham, P. M. (2010). Foreword. In V. Sheared, J. Johnson-Bailey, S. A. J. Colin, III, E. Peterson, S. D. Brookfield & Associates (Eds.), *The handbook of race and adult education* (pp. xxv-xxviii). Jossey-Bass.

Day, R. (2024). Book review of Brookfield, S., Rudolph, J., & Tan, S., "Teaching well. Unveiling the art of learning-centred classrooms". *DBS Applied Research and Theory Journal, March,* 106-107, https://journal.dbs.ie/index.php/dbs/article/view/125/62.

Draper, J. (2015, October 21). No Irish, no blacks, no dogs, no proof. *The Guardian*. https://www.theguardian.com/money/2015/oct/21/no-irish-no-blacks-no-dogs-no-proof

Galtung, J. (1969). Violence, peace, and peace research. *Journal of Peace Research, 6*(3), 167-191.

Hess, M. E. (2018). Using digital storytelling to unearth racism and galvanize action. In S. D. Brookfield & Associates (2018). *Teaching race: How to help students unmask and challenge racism* (pp. 253-272). Jossey Bass.

Hooks, B. (2014). *Teaching to transgress*. Routledge.

Klein, M. (2018). Teaching intersectionality through "I am from…" In S. D. Brookfield & Associates (2018). *Teaching race: How to help students unmask and challenge racism* (pp. 87-108). Jossey Bass.

Marcuse, H. (1969). Repressive tolerance. In R. Wolff, R., B. Moore, & H. Marcuse (1969). *A critique of pure tolerance*. Beacon Press.

O'Brien, J. (2024). Book review of 'Teaching well: Understanding key dynamics of learning-centered classrooms' by Stephen D. Brookfield, Jürgen Rudolph, and Shannon Tan. *Learning: Research and Practice, 10*(1). https://doi.org/10.1080/23735082.2023.2300440

Oluo, I. (2018). *So you want to talk about race*. Seal Press.

Petcher, A. (2012). *Robertson's jam and Golly badges*. Blog post. https://aipetcher.wordpress.com/2012/08/23/robertsons-jam-and-golly-badges/

Preskill, S., & Brookfield, S. D. (2009). *Learning as a way of leading: Lessons from the struggle for social justice*. Jossey-Bass.

Rudolph, J. (2019). Book review of Brookfield, S. D. (2017). Becoming a critically reflective teacher. Second edition. *Journal of Applied Learning & Teaching, 2*(2), 122-124. https://doi.org/10.37074/jalt.2019.2.2.22

Rudolph, J. (2020). Book review of Brookfield, S. D. & Associates (2019). Teaching race. How to help unmask and challenge racism. *Journal of Applied Learning & Teaching, 3*(1), 151–156. https://doi.org/10.37074/jalt.2020.3.1.21

Rudolph, J. (2022). Book review of Brookfield, S. D., & Hess, M. E. (2021). Becoming a white antiracist. *Journal of Applied Learning & Teaching, 5*(1), 203-207. https://doi.org/10.37074/jalt.2022.5.1.23

Said, E. W. (2019 [1978]). *Orientalism*. Penguin Classics.

Sheared, V., Johnson-Bailey, J., Colin III, S. A. J., & Brookfield, S. D. (2010). The beginning. Kitchen table dialogue. In V. Sheared, J. Johnson-Bailey, E. Peterson, S. A. Colin III, S. D. Brookfield & Associates (Eds.), *The handbook of race and adult education: A resource for dialogue on racism* (pp. 1-25). Jossey Bass.

Sheared, V., Johnson-Bailey, J., Peterson, E., Colin III, S. A., Brookfield, S. D., & Associates (2010). *The handbook of race and adult education: A resource for dialogue on racism.* Jossey Bass.

Smith, B. (2018). Forming classroom communities to help students embrace discomfort. In S. D. Brookfield & Associates (Eds.), *Teaching race: How to help students unmask and challenge racism* (pp. 171-189). Jossey Bass.

Sue, D. W. (2010). *Microaggressions in everyday life: Race, gender, and sexual orientation.* John Wiley & Sons.

The Black and White Minstrel Show (n.d.). http://www.turnipnet.com/whirligig/tv/adults/other/tbawm.htm

Upton, B. (2023). *The adventure of two Dutch dolls and a 'Golliwogg'*. Good Press.

Waring, P. (2024). Book review. Brookfield, Stephen D., Rudolph, Jürgen & Tan, Shannon (2024). Teaching well: Understanding key dynamics of learning-centre classrooms. Routledge. *Journal of Applied Learning and Teaching, 7*(1), 1-2. https://doi.org/10.37074/jalt.2024.7.1.5

Xhemaili, M. (2023). Book review of 'Teaching well. Understanding key dynamics of learning-centered classrooms'. *Thesis, 12*(2).