



Talking to my country

By Stan Grant

First published in 2016

Genre & subject

Aboriginal Australians

Racism

Reconciliation

Synopsis

An extraordinarily powerful and personal meditation on race, culture and national identity. In July 2015, as the debate over Adam Goodes being booed at AFL games raged and got ever more heated and ugly, Stan Grant wrote a short but powerful piece for The Guardian that went viral, not only in Australia but right around the world, shared over 100,000 times on social media.

His was a personal, passionate and powerful response to racism in Australia and the sorrow, shame, anger and hardship of being an indigenous man. 'We are the detritus of the brutality of the Australian frontier', he wrote, 'We remained a reminder of what was lost, what was taken, what was destroyed to scaffold the building of this nation's prosperity.' Stan Grant was lucky enough to find an escape route, making his way through education to become one of our leading journalists. He also spent many years outside Australia, working in Asia, the Middle East, Europe and Africa, a time that liberated him and gave him a unique perspective on Australia.

This is his very personal meditation on what it means to be Australian, what it means to be indigenous, and what racism really means in this country. Talking to My Country is that rare and special book that talks to every Australian about their country - what it is, and what it could be. It is not just about race, or about indigenous people but all of us, our shared identity. Direct, honest and forthright, Stan is talking to us all. He might not have all the answers but he wants us to keep on asking the question: how can we be better?

Author biography

Stan Grant (born 30 September 1963) is an Australian television news and political journalist, and television presenter for the Australian Broadcasting Corporation. Grant is of Aboriginal ancestry, from Griffith, New South Wales. He is the son of Stan Grant Sr, an elder of the Wiradjuri people.

Grant commenced his tertiary education at the University of New South Wales, and completed it at the Australian National University. He is currently the ABC's Indigenous and International Affairs Analyst and Professor of Global Affairs at Griffith University in Queensland, Australia.

Discussion starters

- Grant begins his book with an extract from a poem by African American poet Langston Hughes. Why do think he chose this poem and how does it relate to the themes discussed in the book?
- Grant reveals the bullying of Adam Goodes spurred him to write his story. He writes in his book “*This wasn’t about sport; this was about our shared history and our failure to reconcile it*” Do you agree with this view?
- How would you feel if you were unable to fully access, or participate in, something due to your cultural background or beliefs?
- Are there any instances in which you have witnessed or experienced inequalities or racism at play in your personal or professional life and how did this affect you?
- How do you think we can better foster a shared Australian identity that includes Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and heritage? What might we need to change or adjust to help to create this shared Australian identity?
- What is it you want Australia to represent, what role do you think indigenous people should have in Australia and has your view changed since reading this book?
- What do you think needs to occur in order to ensure that past wrongs committed against Aboriginal peoples are not repeated into the future?
- Grant wrote his book in 2016. Have we made progress on the issues Grant raises and do you think we have lived up to the hope that Grant has for his people and ours?
- Grants wants his book to be more than a story of grievance, loss, tragedy, suffering and what white Australia has done to the Aboriginal people. Has he achieved his goal?
- What have you taken away from reading this book? Has it made you question your own attitudes, ideas or beliefs?

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