

DR. SEUSS' RACIST PAST ISN'T THE PROBLEM - YOUR REFUSAL TO HAVE HARD CONVERSATIONS IS



Read Across America is upon us, which is strategically scheduled on Dr. Seuss birthday. It's also the time of year when woke white folks around the country decide that protesting Dr. Seuss is their social justice project for the year. They post about why they're trashing their Dr. Seuss collection because don't you know he was a racist asshole?

To which, I inevitably respond, "what white person isn't racist?" No, seriously, all y'all are racist and choosing to throw away his books doesn't make you any less racist. It does, however, make you the type of person who insists on talking about racism in hushed tones.

I want to acknowledge that part of the reason I'm writing this post is because I get asked about my thoughts on Seuss often around this time of year. Sesame is a huge fan of his books and even requested a Dr. Seuss themed party when he turned five years old. His books are special in our family but they also will help us discuss restorative justice as he gets older.

Now before I go any further, let me just say that yes, Dr. Seuss most certainly drew racist caricatures of Black and Asian people. He dressed in Blackface, as many white folks did during that time period. He also grew up and is, in my opinion, a lesson of what happens when you realize you were wrong and work to do better. Seuss arguably spent the rest of his career writing children's books that teach about the importance of inclusion and acceptance of others and yourself.

- ***Horton Hears a Who*** is a metaphor for the biggest amongst us speaking for the smallest.
- ***The Lorax*** asks us to consider the generations who will come after us in regards to environmental justice.
- ***The Sneetches*** is a clear stance against the oppression of Jews in Germany.

Trashing your collection of Seuss books is easier than doing the real work. It's easier to erase the books from your children's bookshelves than to sit them down and talk about Seuss' past. Instead of asking the library to remove Seuss Day, ask them to spend some time talking about the mistakes that Dr. Seuss made at the beginning of his career.

Justice is not always about canceling someone and their body of work. Sometimes it looks like providing room for restorative justice to take place. In my opinion, Dr. Seuss using the remainder of his career to focus on writing books full of important lessons is an example of restorative justice. While I wish that we had a public apology from him on the record, I also understand that the time he lived in didn't really require those statements from people who weren't politicians or in similar positions of authority.

How will our children learn from our past, if we continue to whitewash it in an effort to seem perfect?

http://mamademics.com/drseuss-racist-past-hard-conversations/?fbclid=IwAR2hHPSRGb7wAoPZj8nd8Ygn4oTxF4b_mbSTTOJIOJtDGp1GC-VvuFmAV0