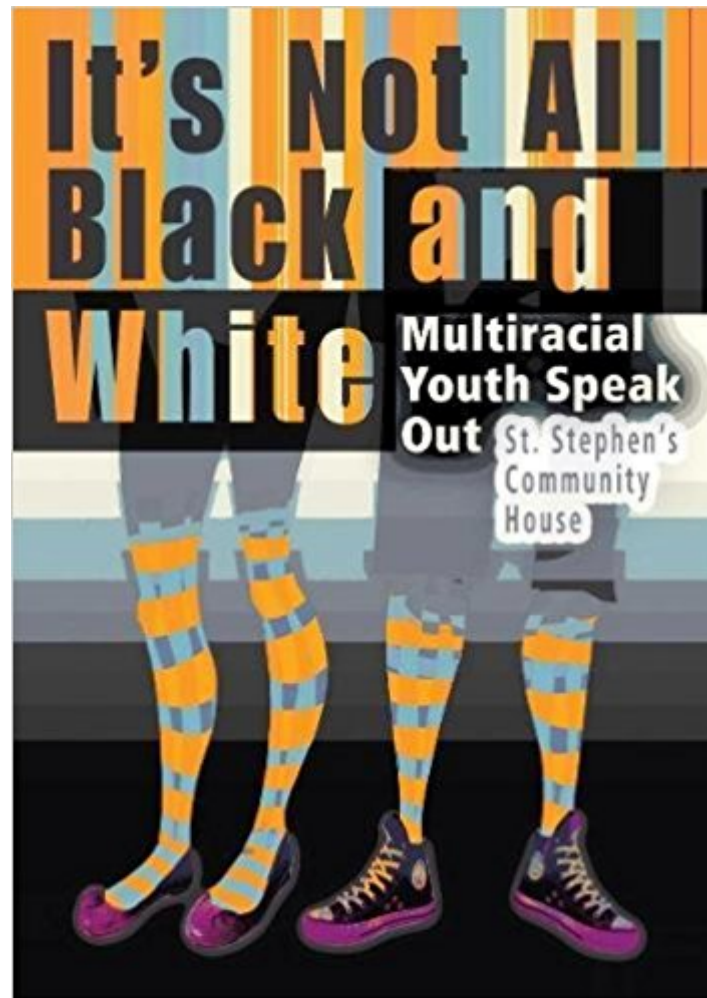




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# It's Not All Black And White: Multiracial Youth Speak Out



## Synopsis

Black, white, and everything in between &#133; Through poems, interviews, and short essays, a group of young people tell what itâ™s like to be biracial, multiracial, or of mixed race. These poignant firsthand accounts reflect the unique and varied voices of the writers, whose backgrounds range from Caribbean, Vietnamese, and Latin American to First Nations, Spanish, and Irish, among others. With devastating honesty, the youth tell what itâ™s been like to make their way in the world with their roots in many places and in many cultures. Themes include navigating mixed-race relationships, dealing with prejudice and the assumptions people make based on appearances, and working through identity confusion to arrive at a strong and positive sense of self. Readers who share these experiences will find comfort, inspiration, and validation. Those less familiar with the issues will gain important insight and understanding.

## Book Information

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Age Range: 12 - 14 years

Grade Level: 7 - 12

## Customer Reviews

This collection of personal stories, poetry, artwork, and photography was created through the project Making Sense of One. Based at St. Stephen's Community House, a social service agency in Toronto, the project brought young adults together to share their experiences and focus on issues of racial identity. Their backgrounds include African, Caribbean, European, Latino, Native American, and South American. Contributions by and interviews with adults who share their experiences and discuss raising mixed-race children are also included. The collection explores how multiracial

people identify themselves and how they are perceived by others; the positive aspects of being able to embrace multiple cultures and ethnicities; as well as the racism they encounter, and the confusion, frustration, resentment, anger, and isolation they experience. Compelling graphics and fonts, some resembling handwriting, impart a visceral sense of directness and intimacy. Sidebars provide definitions of words that have been used to categorize and define race, ethnicity, and interactions among racial groups. People of mixed race will be able to identify with the stories that are shared, and will see themselves reflected in this collection. This important book will be valuable in opening up discussion about issues of racial identity.-Francesca Burgess, Brooklyn Public Library, NY (c) Copyright 2011. Library Journals LLC, a wholly owned subsidiary of Media Source, Inc. No redistribution permitted.

What is race, anyway? is one of the opening questions in this collection of poems, interviews, and essays by multiracial Canadian youth. Beyond race, the teens talk about their relationships with parents, siblings, friends, kids at school, hairdressers, and even themselves, as they struggle to define, decrypt, and discover who they are. Just as the title suggests, these voices comprise different ethnic and racial heritages: Vietnamese, First Nations, Hispanic, and many other groups. Bolstered by occasional small photos and illustrations, the mostly first-person chapters charge through topics like stereotypes, assimilation, and the sexualization of otherness, often with a striking depth that evidences their desire to be seen as individuals rather than a collection of racialized parts. The writing is urgent and gripping, humorous and angry, sad and defiant. An effective companion to Pearl Fuyo Gaskins's *What Are You? Voices of Mixed-Race Young People* (1999). Grades 7-12. --Courtney Jones

Interesting narrative from personal honest perspectives. Rings true to life. A great concept to draw people into the conversation about the joys and heartaches of being biracial

It's taken me a long minute to finally get this onto the pile, but I am glad that I finally did. Honestly, it's right on time since I've had my first child, who is multiracial. This was a really quick read and it was very informative and very well organized. Through interviews, poetry and other forms of writing, young people get to share their experience and how they felt about being mixed. I believe that this is an important piece of work because it gives a voice to an often overlooked community. Though, I have Cherokee and Italian running through me, I self-identify as being black. So I have no idea what the world looks and feels like through multiracial and biracial glasses. And the average person won't

understand that it is experienced differently because of the race one is perceived to be a part of or self-identifies with. This book gives you a lot to think about and to be aware of. It is also a great way to start a dialogue.

This was a very entertaining and thought provoking anthology of stories, poems, interviews and explanations. It felt very authentic and true. The stories were about a variety of things: confusion, intolerance, ignorance, anger and empowerment. None of them were very long but all of them told a different and unique story. I like how the teenage writers cared more about putting their voice out there instead of making their prose as poetic and literary as possible. It felt very real, conversational so that the reader could put themselves in their place and understand what they were feeling. I am not multi-racial but I could understand the feelings they were trying to express by the way they were written. The extra pictures provided made the whole thing feel more personal. All of the stories were great but the stand-outs for me are "Race is Ubiquitous" by Elizabeth Jennifer Hollo, "What Am I Supposed To Look Like" by Leslie Kachena McCue and "Assimilation, Assimilation" by Karuna Sagara. I really liked the poems as well. They're not Shakespeare but they get their point across. I like how some of them even have kind of a hip hop/rap sounding beat, showing a variety in poetry which parallels the variety of racial backgrounds that this anthology is about. My favorite poems in this anthology were "Black & White" by Andrew Ernest Brankley, "What Is Your Crazy Fascination" by Janine Berridge, and "Itty Bitty A One-Woman Play" by Natasha Adiyana Morris. The interviews were also a nice touch. Biracial or multiracial people growing up in a different generation, parents of multiracial children, and compilers of anthologies were all interviewed. That way, the reader gets the perspective of people from different age groups and backgrounds in addition to those of the teenagers writing the other content in this anthology. Overall, this was a strong anthology, very educational. As a racially purebred person, so to speak, it was very refreshing to get a new perspective on the issues that multiracial and biracial have. For example, I learned that they do not like to have their appearance repeatedly emphasized, something I am guilty of doing. The only quip I have with this publication is that it could have been a little more diverse in its writers. By having teens writing several pieces, it kept some of them sounding repetitive. It would have been better if St. Stephen's Community House had asked for submissions from all teens and then selected from them. That way, there would have been more diversity and more stories told.

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