

A10 That Title and The G...Word

"What's in a name but noise and smoke?"

Goethe's *Faust*

In *The Golly*, I attempted to set out my experience growing up Black/Mixed Race in care and in a very White Britain. By the time I had reached eleven or twelve, I was acutely aware of my colour and wrote a short poem on the Barnardo home's letter headed paper:

*"I thank you people of days gone by
Who in poor living then
Found the stars in the sky,
Made easy lives for men.*

*But I hate you people of days gone by.
Inferior now I feel.
You've made me feel an outcast
To all that's white I kneel."*

Phil Frampton, 1965

I have a tube of "*Fair and Lovely*" Mumbai skin whitening cream that I brought back from India in 1998 as a curiosity, because I was appalled at the practice, which goes as far as bleaching the skin, that prevails amongst so many Black and Asian females in the Indian subcontinent and Africa. As for myself, rather than possess any yearning for my skin to be lighter, over the years I have often desired it to be darker, not least to put an end to my facing those irritating and racist stereotypical assertions: "*But you don't look Black to me!*"

In *The Golly*, I reflected on how, during adolescence, my reading of novels had developed, but had involved White heroes, not because I was Mixed Race or because my mother was White, but because of the limited literature I had access to in my school's library. In my mind I was and always have been Black/Mixed Race. I reflected:

*"At school I remained happy and began to finish in the top ten of the class. I could see that a university place was a possibility for me and was a ticket for my future. I scoured the school library for books to take home to read in my room. I raced through all Hemingway's works. I was there in *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, there in *Death in the Afternoon*, there in *The Old Man and the Sea*, there in my world of heroes.*

"At that stage most of my heroes were White despite the fact that I was Black. Apart from my limited knowledge of or access to Black writers, in those days to me the Black skin simply meant pain and I carried that pain. Some might think that I was not Black but "mixed race" or "half caste" or "coffee coloured," but I was Black. In art, we are commonly taught that black and white are not colours. So too with peoples. Our skin may change colour with its exposure or otherwise to the sun's rays but our being Black or White is a social construct imposed upon us and then absorbed.

"I was Black because society made me Black with its taunts of "wog" and "nigger," and the stares, and the news of lynchings in The States and massacres in South Africa.

"It is true that I had no Black cultural heritage. From birth I had been in the care of white people. If anything, my "ethnicity" and cultural heritage were my institutional world of orphans and abandoned and rescued children, where one might find Romulus, Pip, Oliver,

Peter Pan and Wendy and the Lost Boys. Our parents might have originated in Africa, Asia, Caribbean islands or the British Isles, but, whatever that parentage, we shared the same fate and the same life. I read on with my dreams to escape that life and survive in the White world."

Judging a Book By its Cover

Nevertheless, for those outside the care world, probably the most controversial aspect of *The Golly in the Cupboard* was its title. To some it was an outrage. To others who, whether Black or White, had grown up with golliwogs as popular children's toys, it was clever and appropriate, and there were even a few born after the 1980s Gollicocaust saw golliwogs banned or sent to the attic, had no idea what a golliwog was and found the word to be incomprehensible.

Reacting to the comments of a Black customer, Liverpool's radical bookshop, News from Nowhere, placed a wrap around on the memoir sitting on their shelves. On it was written: "*We apologise to anyone who is offended by the title or cover of this book.*" That prompted outrage from another of their Black customer's that a Black author was being, in effect, censored by White people who didn't dare condemn rappers from using the N.... word. Nevertheless, the radical shopkeepers continued to sit on the fence and continued to re-order the book. It made me chuckle. Even the porn magazines rarely appear in a brown paper bag in Britain any more. It must have been one of the very few books in Britain to have the privilege.

There were those friends who commented to me on how they nervously took the book out to read on the tube, fearing that the title or cover might draw arbitrary wrath from other commuters. Equally there were other friends who got their golliwogs out of the attic and others who championed the title.

Recently I listened to a Professor of English in Nova Scotia, Rhoda Zuk, talking to BBC Radio 4's Laurie Taylor about her historical study into the place and meaning of teddy bears and golliwogs in children's lives and books. She insisted that the golliwog had played an important role in creating stereotypes of Black people. Interestingly, the same stance is often taken by those Black people who grew up in Britain after the golliwog era. It is remarkable how three decades on from the Greater London Council's prompting genocidal attacks on golliwogs, it remains the most controversial toy in British history. Perhaps that is why I was keen on my autobiography's title. The reactions to the golliwog reflect all that is irrational about racism, and yet so much of its reality.

Origins of The Title

Addressing meetings and lectures, I often felt the need to explain the title and, if I overlooked it, I would almost inevitably be asked to do so. The controversial title was not sucked from the air but evolved from pieces I had written for *The Guardian* back in 1999. The feature articles concerned my having finally received the files, which Barnardos had kept on me as a child, and my reactions to the contents. In it I explained how, at four years old, I was living in a Barnardo's home in Shropshire but then fostered by a vicar and his wife from Bolton. However, after various of the wife's complaints about me (and especially her illness), I was sent back to a children's home, this time in Southport, Lancashire. In *The Guardian*, I described the episode, writing: "*So I was tossed back in the cupboard, like a one eyed golliwog.*" My two page feature articles, spread over a fortnight were hugely popular, and rather than my being condemned for using the G... word, I was approached

by literary agents and broadcasters to air my story further.

Many young people describing their time in the care system will say: "*I was tossed from pillow to post, like a rag doll,*" or similar. Rag dolls in this country were and are generally seen as being soft toys based on images of White people. Golliwogs were Black toys caricaturing Black people. My skin was referred to as being "coffee coloured" and my ethnic background had played a significant part in my childhood. They had deprived me of ever seeing my father and forced me out of Devon and Cornwall and four homes until I was settled 300 miles away and in a place neither of my choosing or related in any way to my birth family.

Having grown up being acutely aware of being a Black or "coffee coloured child", I felt it appropriate to switch the rag doll with a golliwog.

The golliwog only having one eye referred to a particular aspect of society's stigmatisation of young people in care as being damaged goods, feral or frail. The well meaning vicar's wife, who fostered me, nevertheless complained about the four year old Phillip waking too early in the morning, being a bad influence on her nine year old son, following her teenage daughter around, and talking too much. And I ended up being sent back to live in another children's home – tossed back in the cupboard.

Much of the mixed up middle class morality that people try to impose on others in this country is arbitrary and often conjured up out of fear of the law, company lawyers and their accountants than out of people having mutual respect for each other. Sadly, the law and management dimwits have generated so-called political correctness, which is not political at all, it actually relates to fears of not being sued for breaking the law. In turn, arbitrarily applied management edicts have encouraged the Luddite racists and bigots amongst the middle classes in particular to cling to their casual expressions and application of irrational and harmful prejudices.

A few years ago, a work colleague of mine challenged his director for referring to a Black man as a "spade". His director's response was to call him "one of the PC brigade." Very soon after, my colleague's post was declared to be redundant.

The political correctness (PC) debate is confused, with many of those in the anti-PC brigade being racists and sexists who cling onto their supposed right to offend whoever they wish yet hide behind the law and go scurrying for compensation whenever their own interests are threatened. In the past we used other words for being PC such as manners and respect, but there were still police chiefs who declared that police officers calling Black people Black bastards was acceptable.

The irate 50-plus year olds with their furious anti-PC tirades sound rather like the guy in his fifties who's told to clean the toilet after he's used it, and protests at being asked to be domestically correct: "*Stop nagging! What you telling me that for! I never have cleaned up. That's the way I was brought up.*" Such people don't like the fact that society has moved on to offering manners and respect to sections of society previously discriminated against for centuries.

I heard a woman being interviewed on the radio who said it wasn't right that you could no longer call your dog "*Nigger.*" When I was four, the neighbour had a big Black dog and he called it Nigger, and when he bellowed: "*Nigger*" I was frightened, not for the dog but for me.

However, such bigots are assisted by heavy-handed insensitive methods used by some organisations in the name of being PC. Take the celebrated case of the Malvern 3, where, following a complaint, West Mercia Police raided a shop and confiscated three golliwogs sitting in the shop window, holding them in the station for two weeks. The anti-PC Brigade made much of this clumsy police action, though I'd rather believe that West Mercia Police were acting on a tip-off regarding illegal immigrants.

I feel sorry for our most senior citizens. Long ago they were taught that the polite word for Black people was "coloured". Then came the Black Power movement and Black is Beautiful, and 'coloured' re-emerged as an offensive term. Today, out of polite habit, the old still say 'coloured' and some people get upset by this. And if those who are upset explain why they feel offended, then it is reasonable to expect the offenders to refrain from causing further distress.

When you were young do you remember being told not to stare as staring was rude? You didn't mean to be rude by staring, but then you were taught, with a slap if necessary, to stop because it was offensive. That's all that is being asked of the grumpy old men.

So, it is not what you are allowed to say or not say, and if you think you will not cause personal offence say it. If they tell you otherwise, don't or accept the consequences.

Some claim that being PC is an attack on working class culture and humour. I spent some years on the factory floor. I've had a good laugh, but I've also seen a young woman reduced to tears by a crescendo of wolf-whistling as she crossed the floor of the toolroom. British working class humour may be savage and have banter, yet it doesn't need to offend.

In the 90s I was visiting a Preston council estate on business, and I was followed by a group of six-year olds chanting: "Nigger! Nigger!" Where did this gem of working class culture come from? The same place as when I heard those chants as a kid and coming from people much older than me. What about the working class monkey noises that have followed Black footballers for decades, and which still follow Black footballers in most of Europe?

Who decides what is acceptable? Black footballers have increasingly demanded action against this aspect of working class culture – and well done to Barcelona's Samuel Eto'o who walked off the pitch, and more recently Roma's Francesco Totti, for insisting a game be halted because of the torrents of racist abuse. British Asians have been so dismayed by the regular racism, which they confronted in park football that they set up flourishing Asian leagues.

Football clubs have only taken action when threatened by legal or financial retribution – that's why anti-racist laws are being passed in football and in society. Many organisations have changed their rules to make them appear PC, but this is mainly to protect themselves against the law rather than in a determined effort to eliminate discriminatory behaviour. Management that seriously wishes to eliminate discrimination needs to fully explain and campaign regarding the reasons behind the changes and eliminate its own bullying practices. Otherwise staff will only be upset by edicts that they can't say "duck" or "lasses" or "me lover" or "handicapped" while management can continue to bully and harass whichever employee they choose.

On the contrary, there should be a law against banning words. We do not need to restore

the Inquisition to defeat discrimination, but we need a society that cares and tries to understand and welcome diversity.

We should get uptight about the use of words, not the words themselves. Take the word "bastard", I was born one, but my illegitimate birth doesn't mean to say I am going to be a bastard to everyone I meet. Young White people rapping along to a tune may hear and repeat the word: "Nigga" but you don't hear them all going around using the term. Most realise when they are causing offence and know how to avoid doing so. A word in itself is not offensive, it depends on what it is being used to communicate. I personally find poverty to be offensive, especially my own, but banning the word will not do away with my condition.

On hearing the title of my book, I have often been met by the reaction: "*I thought you were not allowed to say that word, any more*" I occasionally respond: "*Well what if someone is in the work's canteen and asked what toys they had as a kid? Can they tell their friends that they had a golliwog? Should they be worried?*"

You can't eliminate offensive words by edict. Having been made real, they linger in the air. You can try to legislate how a word is used but that is a very different matter. Frankly, any organisation that disciplined a worker for mentioning their golliwog in their list of childhood toys would not have a leg to stand on, and the PC scaremongers know it.

Racist Britain

The tale of the golliwog is a salutary example. I and many Black people, and millions of White people had golliwog cuddly toys as kids. Up until the 1980s, Robertson Jam's famous marketing ploy was to give out enamel golliwog badges to customers sending in the golliwog labels which came with Robertson jam jars. I collected the labels. I never objected to either the toy or the word. I did object when I was called golliwog, just as much as when I was called nigger or wog or Black Sambo.

In the post war years, Black people grew up branded as savages. Our African brothers and sisters were depicted as dressed in grass skirts, with bones in their noses and wielding spears to hunt men or animals to fill their cooking pots outside their grass thatched huts. Even in the late 1990s my godmother was able to supply me with a postcard on sale at a London cathedral portraying Black people as savages. In the largely White towns and cities of Britain, we faced random and arbitrary abuse and discrimination on account of the colour of our skin.

When, as a boy, I learned that, being a Barnardo's orphan, I would get a chance to be shipped out to Australia, I was interested in the land of oranges and sunshine, cuddly koalas and brightly coloured cockatoos. After all, it was also the land, which made one of my favourite television series, "*The Terrific Adventures of the Terrible Ten*," in which ten orphan children built and ran their own town. What I didn't realise was that the offer of being shipped out to the British colony wasn't meant for children in the home like me.

In 1998, in a House of Commons Parliamentary report on "*The Welfare of Former British Child Migrants*," many of whom were plucked from our orphanages to populate the remnants of Britain's Empire, the MPs commented on the policy that:

"A further motive was racist: the importation of "good white stock" was seen as a desirable policy objective in the developing British Colonies. One of our witnesses, Mr John

Hennessey, a former child migrant, told us how on arrival in Fremantle he and the other children were greeted by a senior clergyman, who said, "It's nice to see you children here. Australia needs you. We need white stock. We need this country to be populated by white stock because we are terrified of the Asian hordes." Likewise, according to the Child Migrants' Trust, "child migrants were used as a way to preserve a White managerial elite in the former Rhodesia." (pt 18 Select Committee on Health Third Report 30th July 1998"

My godmother, Martha Watson, was one of the more enlightened of the young women emerging from the teacher training colleges. In 1953, she opted to spend two years teaching in Botswana, one of Britain's African colonies. She returned in 1955 on a ship which hugged the East African coastline, taking in other Britons heading back to England. She still recalls her conversation with the English wife of a White farmer returning from their plantation in Kenya:

"She said that each morning her husband left the house early and whilst he was out she could hear the thump. Africans were being hung, their necks broken as they dangled on the end of a noose. It was horrific and the time of the Mau Mau. Of course, it is all coming out now but we knew what the colonial settlers did was terrible."

During the Mau Mau rebellion when Kenyans fought for their right to live in a democratic independent state free from British colonial rule, British settlers and troops imprisoned over 70,000 Kenyans. The British government has now accepted that many of those incarcerated were tortured, many suffering castration, severe sexual assaults and beatings. Many more were routinely hanged. For the British rulers, which just ten years earlier had called on Britons and the colonial peoples to join the fight for freedom from Nazi Germany and Japan, it very much suited them to portray the Kenyans and Black people as a whole as primitive and brutal savages, reasonably denied their freedom.

My own story prompted a woman to write to me saying how in 1950 she had decided to marry her first boyfriend, a Jamaican demobbed from the RAF. Though she was a regular churchgoer, the vicar refused to have the couple married in his church and they had to go elsewhere. Having got married, she then applied for a mortgage but were again turned down on account of her husband being Jamaican. Instead they saved up for eight years until they could apply to buy a ramshackle house in Yorkshire.

Discovering that a house in the locality was going to be purchased by a West Indian and his wife, the neighbours tried, albeit unsuccessfully, to pressure the owner not to sell. The couple settled in the house but the neighbours refused to let their children play with the sons of the 'coloured' man, even though they went to the same school.

A mixed race woman who had grown up in a Children's Society orphanage, showed me her files from the 1950s. Senior staff referred to her as: *"a typical darkie, sullen but occasionally puts on a great big smile."* Leaving care, she applied to become a carer in one of their homes. Her files stated that she was refused because: *"...none of our Children's Officers in Yorkshire will employ a coloured girl."*

We had to fight and suffer simply because of our colour. I might have been a "pale, coffee coloured child" but I had to fight. My pain was recorded in my files:

"Affectionate, sulks occasionally, otherwise never stops talking! Rather sensitive about his colour."

Miss Stewart, January, 1960

“Phillip is a charming and very intelligent little boy. He used to be rather unhappy about his colour, till I told him god made lots of little boys brown and loved them just as much as white ones, since when he seems to have accepted that he is brown quite happily. We all love Phillip.”

Miss Stewart, January, 1962

Mark Eaton was Black and two years older than me. He was my friend and hero. He beat up anyone in Infants school who called me “Nigger”. When Mark was sent to a remand home for his sins, I had to defend myself, and fight I did, at school and in the children's home. But when I was out alone and outnumbered, I could do nothing but take the abuse and provocation. That hurt.

Contrary to what the Barnardo's Matron in the home, Miss Stewart, wrote, the pain didn't go away. I just learned that she could do nothing about it. The poem I wrote, which ended with the searing words: “...to all that's white I kneel,” spelt the pain of a twelve year old child living in the very White Lancashire town of Southport.

Twickenham's rugby fans are often portrayed on the television singing the rugby anthem *Swing Low Sweet Chariot*, but I remember the second verse of this rugby anthem being sung on the school coach as we returned home from games around the county. It included the words: “*I went over Jordan and what did I see? A bloody great nigger running after me!*”, which was followed by fingers rapidly flicking pouting lips to create a baby blubbing sound. I sat through it and laughed through my pain. Sometimes I wonder whether, on the rugby team coaches, they still sing that second verse today.

I left my grammar school with my heroes, Che Guevara and the Black Panther revolutionary fighters, Bobby Seale, Angela Davis and Huey P Newton. And as much as my shaven head, and skin grown paler by a life hiding from the Manchester rains, tempt the more ignorant to insist with a shake of their head: “*You don't look Black to me,*” (which incidentally is the upgraded version of the equally prejudiced sixties remarks of: “*You're not like the others.*”), I still feel the pain of both past abuse directed at me, my friends and my peoples, and racism today. The title of *The Golly*, is a reminder of the pain that was imposed on us.

Origins of the Golliwog

While the title is very much a tilt at the arbitrary imposition of middle class morality, it is also a reminder of the searing pain of growing up with racial abuse from all around and all classes in British society, and the burning anger and contempt it generated. Sometimes I feel that this may be why some middle class Blacks in particular, feel uncomfortable with the title. But that is probably more down to the history of the golliwog – a salutary tale.

Sometimes we need a good kick to remind us of where we have come from. In this case, in the fifties and the ‘swinging sixties’ even the most caring parts of society were riddled with racism and ignorance. *The Golly in the Cupboard* was a reference to my feelings of being loved, rejected, dumped, hidden away and kept in the dark. It is not a reference to Black people but to social attitudes towards Black people in the post war years.

Many of today's middle-aged Black and White people had golliwogs or golliwog badges as children, and watched the Black & White Minstrel Show without any sense of outrage. In those years, we unconsciously absorbed aspects of racism. In the case of the golliwog, the

character became a grotesque caricature of Black people and virtually the only Black doll around.

A great deal of nonsense has been written and said about our golliwogs. The origins of the golliwog lie in the writings of Florence Upton, an American woman born to English parents. She based the character on her time as a child when she and her friends would play very roughly with their Black rag doll. Upton's English family returned to England where she later created the golliwog character as a particularly unsightly dwarf-like caricature of a Black Minstrel who's appearance initially scares two pretty (White) Dutch dolls who come across him. In her book, *The Adventures of Two Dutch Dolls*, which was published in 1895, following the dolls' initial horror, they soon find the golly to be fun, gallant and lovable. The stories about the three friends' adventures together were so popular with children that they stretched into several books.

Upton is not around to engage in the debate, but it seemed clear to me that her intention, even if misguided by modern standards, was to combat racism rather than promote it. Indeed the impact of her golliwog books was to see parents making golliwog rag dolls for their children who commonly slept beside them and their teddy bears. The question is simple: "Why on earth would young White children each night cuddle up in the dark to their golliwog if it was supposed to be a figure of hate?"

As the 20th century began, the clamour for golliwogs intensified. Upton had not copyrighted the character and hence various manufacturers moved in to profit from them. Images of the golly began to appear on Christmas cards, badges, teething rings, trade cards, toys, games, postcards, cakes and sweets. Golliwog songs were composed and the golly appeared in other writers' fiction. In 1908, mass production of golliwog ragdolls began.

Most famous of those to take advantage of the golliwog craze was the British jam manufacturer, James Robertson & Son, who in 1910 began using the golly as its trademark. It appeared on its product labels, price lists and advertising materials. In 1928, it began producing enamel golliwog badges given away in order to promote its jam. The golliwog had big eyes, big smiling lips and a yellow waistcoat on which was written "Robertson's Golden Shred", a reference to its marmalade product. The badges could be secured by sending in coupons, which came with the jam jars. So in demand were they that over the next 60 years, responding to requests, the company sent out 20 million badges. What made millions of children wear badges of a figure of hate?

The lovable image of the golly was threatened in 1910 when some writers in Britain and the United States created golliwog characters that were malicious. This is no surprise given both countries' governments were imbued with racism and business depended on the super-exploitation of Blacks. White children sleeping with their lovable icons of Black people certainly did not sit comfortably with government policies of racial segregation still practised in British colonies and the United States.

Famous American children's author, Enid Blyton, displayed her racism in her children's tale, *The Three Golliwogs*, in which she most infamously wrote: "*Once the three bold golliwogs, Golly, Woggie, and Nigger, decided to go for a walk to Bumble-Bee Common. Golly wasn't quite ready so Woggie and Nigger said they would start off without him, and Golly would catch them up as soon as he could. So off went Woggie and Nigger, arm-in-arm, singing merrily their favourite song -- which, as you may guess, was Ten Little Nigger Boys.*"

The word "wog" came into common British army use as a derogatory reference to non-

Whites in the colonies. It eventually became a commonly used abusive British term for all non-Whites, as reflected in the lines of the racist character, Alf Garnett, whom we were expected to laugh at in the 1960s television comedy, *Till Death Us Do Part*, where he also referred to Black people using the derogatory term “coons.” It was also in the “Swinging Sixties” that soldiers in the British Army's regiment, the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders, operating in Aden, were said to have donned a Robertson's golly badge for each Arab they killed in the British colony (now known as Yemen).

The Gollicaust

Nevertheless, in the post war years the popularity of the golliwog remained undiminished amongst children where it was only second to that of the teddy bear. Post war immigration from the colonies saw Black and Mixed Race children taking to the golly without any sense that the golly was a symbol of racism, even though the words wog and golliwog would often be used abusively by Whites, and still are today. For example, in 2009, the BBC dropped Carol Thatcher, daughter to the late Prime Minister, as a presenter on *The One Show* after she referred to a professional tennis player as a "golliwog" in a conversation with a fellow presenter of the TV programme.

In our children's home in Southport there were, for the most part, at least eight of us children who had to face this abuse around the town but we didn't stop liking our golliwog badges, which portrayed our gollies playing musical instruments, a sport or simply carrying a jar of marmalade. I liked the marmalade. We also chomped our way through hundreds of penny Black Jack sweets utterly oblivious to the golliwog image on their label. And even when I embraced the Black Power movement and marched for the release of the Communist Black activist, Angela Davis, I still didn't view the golliwog as racist.

So what changed? Where did all the gollies go? During the 1970s racism was still rife in Britain and the failure of the then Labour governments to positively address issues of poverty and unemployment amongst the working classes led to the rise of support for the fascist and racist National Front and violent clashes between the fascists and racists on the one hand and Black people and progressives on the other. It also led to the return of the 1979 right wing Thatcher government, which presided over a major rise in unemployment and cuts in welfare services. As with the 2010 Coalition government, its actions led to huge discontent, which boiled over in widespread riots in the summer of 1981. White and Black ghettos exploded but to the fore were the major riots in the Black districts, Brixton in London and Toxteth in Liverpool.

The Police were overwhelmed and the government shuddered. It ordered an enquiry, which led to Lord Scarman's report. Amongst other measures it suggested following the American example where the response to the 1960's civil rights riots was to give leaders of the Black community a greater stake in society. This partly translated into promoting Black middle class politicians and promoting more Blacks in local government.

The riots didn't end racism but they did lead to an increase in Black middle class politicians, who instead of confronting racism directly focussed on token issues they thought were offensive such as gender and racial nomenclature, which the White progressive politicians found difficult to oppose. Robertson's golliwog was directly in their firing line. In 1983, the Greater London Council declared a boycott of Robertson's products – a much easier task than weeding out endemic racism in the city's Police force, law courts and prisons, of which they did next to nothing.

Outside the cosy doors of local councils there were much more serious campaigns taking place. Not only were there the battles against the fascists. We had been campaigning on the streets against racism, notably the "Sus Laws", which the Police notoriously used to arrest Black people on the simple grounds that they suspected they may commit a crime. We set up other campaigns against Police harassment of Blacks. In Toxteth, Liverpool, we organised a public protest meeting and as we arrived we spotted Police Black Maria arrest vehicles at each corner surrounding the venue.

In the early 1990s, my eldest daughter came home from her primary school, crying because the teachers had made her wear "Golliwog" knickers. In tears she said to her mother: *"I wish I was white like you."* We complained to the education authorities because that was a serious case of racial insensitivity. Because it was a school with very few parents of Black children we demanded that she be moved to a new school and were successful. We were fighting racism, not the Golliwog and after a few racist incidents at the next school I set up a Parents of Black Children group at the school and briefly one across Manchester to combat the outcomes of racial prejudices amongst the school authorities and staff.

In London, a populist campaign against the golly had begun. The Gollicaust was intensive and superficially persuasive, especially amongst the new waves of Black Africans migrating to Britain. Despatched to the attics or worse still waste bins, Golliwogs began to disappear en mass. Many shops ceased to sell them and by 1988, golliwogs were axed from television advertising. Many attractive alternative dolls were appearing in toy stores and as children ceased to be supplied with golliwogs, Robertson's finally brought the curtains down on its golly badge scheme in 2001, citing lack of interest from children.

The residue of the Gollicaust is most starkly displayed in the disgruntlement of millions of middle aged White people who, quite justifiably, cannot except that the golliwogs they loved in their childhood and often passed onto their children were a symbol of racism. There is something so absurdly insane in media pieces trying to persuade White adults that, as children, they took their golliwogs to their beds because they hated them.

In 1983, the company's products were boycotted by the Greater London Council as offensive, and in 1988 the character ceased to be used in television advertising. The company used to give away Golly badges and small plaster figures playing musical instruments or sports and other such themes. By 2009, production of Robertson's Jam had ceased. Only Golden Shred struggled on under new owners.

Robertson, perhaps could have avoided all the negative publicity and the demise of the golly if it had taken the path chosen by Mattel, the American manufacturers of the Barbie Dolls, which first hit the market in 1959. The Barbie, a doll depicting a White woman was immensely popular with children but one limitation and source of criticism was that it was white. Mattel responded and in 1980 put Black Barbie on the market. White, brown, yellow and green golliwogs would have headed off the Gollicaust. Sadly for Robertson, its management lacked that intelligence.

From a Black perspective, the 1980s and 1990s political correctness movement in relation to nomenclature was an important part of stamping on racist attitudes and making society aware of words we found unacceptable to be referred to by others. The PC movement carried on into certain local and ridiculous extremes, included in which were the

reprimands meted out to those who used the term “brainstorming” rather than “thought showering”.....

The fact that the Black young can now feel safe to use racist terms such as ‘nigger’ and wear Golliwog images again is a reflection of a vast alteration in confidence since the pre-Black is Beautiful days of the 1960s. We are no longer prepared to tolerate racism. Hence we use those words more freely because if they are used against us in a derogatory manner, we now fight back. This was not the case in the past. Then we felt our hands tied and many of us took the racist insults.

The job of fighting racism remains, especially amongst those in authority. But now Black people in British cities are confident of not tolerating racism, we sometimes, in irony, use words or terms, which were the tools of the oppressor. Most White youth understand this. While they hear Black rappers using the term ‘nigger’ and rap along to their favourite artists, most understand that it is unacceptable to use that term when they themselves are referring to Black people.

I reasoned that nobody objected to the band, Niggers With Attitude (NWA), so what was the problem with my Golly? It’s new and out.

“Your book caused a bit of a stir at my best friends place of work. I lent her your book and, she left it lying around in the office. One of her Black employees spotted the title and the golly on the front. She was initially very offended by it declaring that: “It shouldn't be left out on display,” etc. When my friend managed to explain the meaning behind the title, she did eventually soften.”

“I was reading it on the train into work and got some funny looks from another Black guy.”

It says a huge amount about our modern era that people can find the image of a children's toy, which was so loved by Black and White alike forty years beforehand can now generate so much hot air, anger and police activity. In many ways, I liken their reactions to my own on my second visit to Delhi in India when I spotted a large swastika hanging on the wall of a backstreet restaurant. I had returned to the cheap and cheerful establishment because of its delicious servings of butter chicken. Suddenly the butter chicken was not so tasty. I was sitting on my own, alone in a huge great city and leering over me was the symbol of Nazism, a cause so supported by India's fascist RSS thugs of the Hindustani nationalist BJP's right wing.

I was a self-professed Marxist who had been lured into the den by my desire to eat. Despite the fact that I was not in the country on political business, I finished my meal, wiping my plate clean with a roti and left, occasionally glancing behind me.

On that visit to Delhi, I never returned to the restaurant. I could not support an establishment that promoted fascism and right wing nationalism. What troubled me further was that some shops in the city brazenly displayed the swastika over their entrances. India was in more danger than I had realised.

I left Delhi and was travelling by train down to Bangalore when I got into conversation with some old Karnataka Freedom Fighters. Heroes of the struggle to free India from British rule, they dressed in white, with white Gandhi caps and enjoyed their reward, which included free travel on India's railways for life.

As the rain passed by a small town, I spotted a few establishments sporting the dreaded swastika and asked the ageing heroes why there were so many on show. I was fortunate to ask the question rather than make an assertion concerning fascism because the Freedom Fighters put me at ease, explaining that many establishments across India displayed the sign because it was a symbol seen to bring good luck and good fortune. India was safe. I hid my embarrassment. It occurred to me that, shamefully, my ignorance of the subcontinent's use of the swastika had generated a prejudice against those who displayed it. In any case, Hitler's swastika pointed in the opposite direction to the Sanskrit original.

In the same sense, I accept the title and cover may non-plus some Black people who didn't grow up in Britain's age of the Gollywog. Many of them have succumbed to the simplistic notion that the gollywog was an evil depiction by Whites of Black people and that gollywog dolls and iconography and those who display them are intrinsically racist. Prejudice is not a one way street. They need to know that life is much more complex. Unfortunately, many Whites are also confused about the issue and embarrassed by those Blacks who point the finger of racist accusation. The British establishment is quite content with this old divide and rule tactic. It lets Black and White politicians alike off the hook of dealing with the real problems of racism and ethnic minority poverty in Britain.

However, apart from the 'writes' and wrongs of the title, there remained the question of whether it helped or hindered promotion and marketing of the book, as reflected in the wraparound placed on *The Golly* in the radical Liverpool bookshop. Given the book was intended to have a radical message was the title itself a barrier to reaching a progressive audience? Research by Gordon Hodson and other psychologists at Ontario's Brock University in 2011 pointed to people with left wing views having more intelligence than those with right wing views, and racists were found to have a generally lower intellectual level of reasoning. Of course, its flattering to believe this. That aside, my belief is that genuine radicals would have been jolted and intrigued rather than put off by the title. The left wing Labour leader, Tony Benn, for example put his name to campaigns against Robertson's gollywog, but declared the title "*marvellous*" and very kindly wrote the book's Foreword.

There is another argument, namely that the media is not dominated by radicals and that they may have feared using such a term for fear of a backlash. In particular, after its publication, sections of the BBC said that they could not feature *The Golly* in the Cupboard on their programmes because of its title. However, when BBC Radio Merseyside had me presenting a programme based on the book, and called the documentary *Golly in the Cupboard*, it won the 2005 national Race in the Media Award (RIMA) from non other than the Commission for Racial Equality (CRE). The BBC were then proud to announce that their programme with the G word had won a RIMA award.

My general conclusion was however, that the real barrier to the *The Golly* receiving more widespread publicity was that new titles by small publishers are pitching themselves against multi-million pound publishers prepared to spend millions on marketing, even when their books are drivel. In addition, the world of care and orphanages is outside the experience of the huge majority of people in this country, which is underlined by there during the last few decades, no factual books on care have been bestsellers.

The Golly reflected on life for Black British children such as myself, growing up in a country only very slowly emerging from its racist and colonial heritage in the immediate post war years. Fifties Britain had very few Black or Asian professionals but shipped in tens of

thousands of Blacks and Asians from the Caribbean and South Asia. The establishment attempted to continue in its own tried and tested racist ways but was threatened by huge instability as reflected in the speeches of the Conservative Party's Enoch Powell who forecast "rivers of blood" if sixties Britain did not put an end to the mass immigration of Black and Asian people from the former colonies.

Echoing the views of their Whiter apartheid counterparts in South Africa, Powell and the right wing of the Conservative Party placed the blame for racial tensions on the inability of the so-called races to mix rather than on racial oppression and prejudice which the ethnic minorities were expected to tolerate. I, like many other "coloured people" had to face being sent packing by landlords who did not want coloured tenants and by employers who would not hire Black workers. In sport we were expected to endure racist chants, songs and abuse, TV comedians and comedies churned out racism and the Head of the Metropolitan Police Force appeared on TV declaring that it was fine for his Police officers to refer to the likes of us as "Black Bastards,"

Only the aforementioned riots, which began in the Black British ghettos in 1980 and 1981, spreading into the poor White communities as protests against not only racism but also poverty, unemployment and Police brutality, moved the establishment. It was as if they had understood that the threatened rivers of blood would flow not between Blacks and Whites but between rich and poor. The White government and local authorities however only had a thin layer of lower middle class Blacks and Asians from which they were willing to take advice, and this layer had no real experience of how to tackle racism. The resultant actions were often clumsy, inappropriate and tantamount to quackery, the reported banning of Blackboards and their replacement with white boards being a case in point, so too the Gollicast.

Ethnic Matching

In social work and child protection a new policy emerged; namely ethnic matching, where it was argued that, in the care system, a child's development would be assisted by the child being placed with a carer of the same ethnicity, culture or colour. The proposition had some attraction in so much as many ethnic minority children suffered at the hands of racist, prejudiced or at best ignorant White carers. Most White carers had little idea of the differing treatment needed for Black African skin or hair, no awareness of prevalent Afro-Caribbean illnesses such as Sickle Cell. There were also cases where ethnic minority children were placed in the care of openly racist families and others were carers who had no idea how to support children suffering from racial abuse.

When, at six years old, I complained to the Matron in my Barnardo's home about being racially abused, she reported that she had tried to reassure me by stating: "*God loves all his children, Black, Brown or White.*" It didn't take me long to work out that God did not love us Black kids enough to protect us from the abuse of others. Rather that we had been abandoned in a world where I could write: "*to all that's White I kneel.*"

There were some clear bases for consideration. In particular, when a child had been raised for several years in a particular culture, which might imply specific diets, religion, dress code etc. However, with many children born in Britain being heavily exposed to aspects of the country's culture and many infants too young to have settled into a specific culture, it was utterly false to equate skin colour or even ethnic origin with cultural issues.

Scanty attempts were made to imbue social work teams with an understanding of child

development and ethnicity or skin colour, as little serious research had been carried out in historically racially segregated Britain. Least of all were social workers educated in anti-racism, and consequently they applied their ignorance and prejudices in dealing with the young people. In a knee jerk reaction, henceforth Black children and even Mixed Race children were to be placed in Black families.

The simplistic notion that Black children would more likely to identify with Black carers, and that children and adults could be paired up like so many coloured Smarties, was at heart racist and supportive of colour prejudice. Our schools' and children's bookshelves are full of characters and heroes with whom people readily identify, not because of the colour of their skin but because of many varying factors, particularly relating to their character traits rather than their physical appearance. Most notably our children even associate with animal characters and cartoon figures, some more akin to a blob of jelly than a human being.

The Smartie policy was a pseudo-psychological response to the pseudo-scientific concept of race, both defying meaningful definition. The result was that many much more important developmental needs for the child were subordinated to a policy with its origins in racism and perpetuated by racism. The White carers in my children's homes may have not been able to meet our needs when confronted with racism, but they left much more to be desired in understanding our dietary, self esteem and educational needs. Indeed, collectively we could handle racial abuse, but many other needs required an adult intervention which was severely lacking.

In the name of ethnic matching, many Black children raised with a British urban culture in our cities were placed with Black West Africans whose culture was more alien to them than the White family that lived next door. Most notably, the authorities made little attempt to solve a drastic shortfall in the ethnic minority supply of suitable foster carers. My Barnardo files used in *The Golly* revealed how the charity was ready to offer families carers' allowances more than 20% above the standard rate, if a fosterer took in a Black child. However, in the name of race equality, no special measures are funded to remedy the plight of these children today. Instead the authorities rely on adverts and roadshows.

With the nationally chronic shortage of foster carers, Black or White, the overall impact of such policies is to leave proportionately many more ethnic minority children being moved from one emergency placement to another, in perpetual limbo until an ethnic match comes along.

In *The Crying Shame* programme, I interviewed a blonde housewife and mother of two living in Devon. She told me of her struggle to adopt a Mixed Race boy because the local authority had deemed her colour unacceptable, The social work team turned her down, also stating that she did not understand racism. Instead, they placed the child with a Black carer. Terribly disappointed but undeterred, she sought out local anti-racism groups and educated herself on the issue. The boy's placement with the Black family broke down and then only reluctantly did the authority concede to my interviewee's wishes to adopt him.

There are two stand out issues from the Devon mother's experience. Primarily, there was the matter of the authority's fear that the would-be adopter of a Mixed Race child was insufficiently aware of how to respond to the needs of the boy in regard to his colour and ethnic skin. Most of all there was the issue of training up the adopter in how to deal with the racism that she and her son would undoubtedly face as he grew up.

In counties like Devon and Cornwall, where Blacks and Asians are a tiny minority, racial prejudices and ignorance linger on much longer. In the radio programme we had also interviewed some Black men who had lived most of their lives in the region and they told me of the racism they had suffered and which I had been spared by having been sent out of the region as an infant. A mixed race construction worker in Truro confirmed to me that reference to Black people as "Darkies" and the like reflected the persistence of a crude and ignorant prejudice against ethnic minorities. He reflected on his 40 years of involvement in fights on account of the "dark" colour of his skin.

Had the region moved on? Some said that they felt it had at least to some degree but there remain alarming incidents of attacks on newly arriving ethnic minorities in Exeter in particular. Then there are the people of Padstow who, despite protests, insist on continuing with their Darkie Days festivals when townsfolk blacken their faces, dress up and make out they are Black people. They swear their innocence but only changed the name of the event to Yummer Days after threats from the Deputy Chief of the Devon & Cornwall Police Constabulary at calling them Darkie Days. I recalled the horrible days as children when we suffered from the drunken racially abusive Orangemen who annually marched through Southport, and I wondered how a Black young person would cope with the Darkie Days.

And if I had any lingering doubts as to the basis of the fears of the social workers regarding racial ignorance in the area, they were dispelled in Wadebridge when we were in search of a member of an ethnic minority to explore their experience in the town. We were told that there was a man who often frequented one of the local pubs who might wish to speak to us. He was known locally as "Dark Mark".

Nevertheless, there is no doubt that much racial ignorance can be eliminated by education and experience, if there is a will. In the adoption case, the authority could have saved the young boy and the mother a great deal of upset and heartache by offering training to the would be adopter, instead of rejecting her out of hand. The provision of training requires a budget, and, in effect, the Smarties policy avoided the real issue of the need for training of carers not just in regard to ethnic, racial and cultural issues but in the many other areas important to a young person's development, such as diet, education, bonding, protocols, sibling relations and birth family reparations.

However, the stark reality is that the fostering system exists to avoid such expenditure on professional care and hence every financial shortcut is presented as a panacea. As with the anti-racist laws, the authorities committed to a war against racism but refused to fund the army required to fight it. The consequence was chaos and the highest casualty figures were in the ethnic minorities.

Secondly there is the irony, which I pointed to in the programme; namely that 50 years previously, it had been reported that there was no chance of me being fostered or adopted in Devon or Cornwall because of the racial prejudices of even the practising Christians within the community. Half a century on and the counties' White people were being told they have no chance of adopting or fostering a Black or Mixed Race child because of the racial policies of their County Councils.

It was an ill-thought out policy, which was often applied crudely and pandered to racist notions rather than assisting ethnic minority children. Nevertheless, Cameron's Coalition government's proposal to scrap the "Smarties policy" could lead to a return to the old problems because the training which my Devon housewife readily accepted she needed, has, to date, not been financially provided for by the government or the local authorities

When the government announced its U turn ending ethnic matching as a government priority, The Times published my response:

Sadly while token gestures remain as the main currency with which politicians attempt to assuage our communities, resolving social problems will always be left to future governments unless the people engage en masse. The Golly in the Cupboard, as a title, hopefully encouraged people to both inspect and reject social tokenism within our society.