

The Development of Children and Families of Color: A Supplemental Framework

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INDIVIDUAL AND FAMILY developmental theories are valuable frameworks for understanding human experience. Many of the major developmental theories have made enormous contributions toward conceptualizing human growth. However, few individual or family developmental theories explicitly address issues of race and racial oppression. Given the substantial variations that exist between groups on the basis of race, the lack of attention to this variable seems like a rather large oversight. This is particularly true with respect to the experiences of children and families of color whose lives are deeply affected by racial devaluation.

This chapter briefly reviews and critiques from a racial perspective the theories of five major developmental theorists: Sigmund Freud, Erik Erikson, Jean Piaget, Lawrence Kohlberg, and Evelyn Millis Duvall. This is followed by a discussion of how the lives of children and families of color are affected by virtue of living in a society that devalues them racially. Because of the specific challenges created by living in such an oppressive context, children and families of color must negotiate several unique tasks in addition to those that are specified in traditional developmental theories. Hence, the developmental framework proposed in this chapter is intended as a supplement to existing theories.

OVERVIEW OF THE MAJOR THEORIES

FREUD

Freud was the architect of psychosexual theory, which conceived of development as occurring primarily from birth through the early years of childhood. He suggested that development involves five stages: oral, anal, phallic, latency, and genital. Each stage is closely tied to biological maturation and the gradual unfolding and development of the three major elements of personality, the id, the ego, and the superego. According to Freud's theory, per-

sonality development involves the struggle between the forces associated with these three parts of personality. The id represents the unconscious mind, which is motivated by instinctual drives, wishes, and impulses; the superego represents the superconscious mind, which is motivated by conscience and ensures conformity with internalized social norms; and the ego represents the conscious mind, which exists between the other two and is the central part of the personality (Freud, 1962, 1963).

ERIKSON

Erikson, considered a neo-Freudian, also conceived of individual development in terms of the ego. In Erikson's formulation, however, the ego is present from birth and it is essentially conflict free. As the individual begins to grow and develop, the ego gradually becomes embroiled in a series of developmentally based conflicts that involve negotiating oppositional tensions between the need to grow and the need to stay the same, and between the interests of the ego versus the interests of society. Erikson outlined eight age-based stages of psychosocial development through which he believed all people develop. Each new stage is characterized by the onset of a preordained developmental crisis that consists of conflicting forces that the individual must negotiate. The extent to which a crisis is successfully resolved affects the overall health and viability of one's ego and has significant implications for the degree to which future developmental crises are functionally resolved (Erikson, 1963).

PIAGET

Piaget conceptualized development in terms of cognitive processes that are reflected in four age-based, developmental stages, including sensorimotor, preoperational, concrete operational, and formal operational stages. Piaget believed these stages unfolded in accordance with a biological blueprint and that each successive stage builds on the former one(s). According to Piaget, as a child grows, she or he develops increasingly complex and sophisticated cognitive functions that are characterized by "transformations of earlier modes of understanding to qualitatively different organizations of knowledge" (Green, 1989, p. 189). Hence development occurs in a linear fashion, without the possibility of regressions or the loss of skills or abilities that have already been acquired. In each stage of cognitive development, children experience two opposing tendencies, assimilation (the absorption of new information) and accommodation (the appropriate application and utilization of this knowledge). Both of these tendencies are mediated by equilibration, which is the process of adaptation that balances the two (Piaget, 1963, 1966): "Equilibration can be viewed as the process of change in which individuals move from the equilibrium of one stage, through a transition of disequilibrium, to a hierarchically integrated new form of equilibration at the next stage" (Green, 1989, p. 167).

KOHLBERG

Kohlberg focused on how children grow and develop morally beginning during the preschool years and advancing through childhood into adulthood. He defined morality in terms of justice and fairness and argued that it is based on cognitive rather than emotional processes, and that behaviors are not necessarily indicative of one's stage of moral reasoning. Like Piaget, Kohlberg believed children develop through biological, age-based stages of moral development that are closely tied to cognitive development. Also like Piaget, Kohlberg posited that stages of moral development involve qualitative transformations

from one level of reasoning to the next such that each new stage of development involves the hierarchical integration and reconstruction of former stages.

Moral judgments are specialized cognitive functions that require the ability to compare multiple perspectives. When an individual has two contradictory beliefs, this creates a conflict that invokes cognitively based moral principles that are used to resolve the conflict. As individuals continue to grapple with cognitively based moral conflicts, their thinking processes become increasingly organized and more adaptive. There are three levels of moral development, preconventional, conventional, and postconventional. Each level consists of two stages that are extensions of underlying cognitive operations (Kohlberg, 1975, 1984).

DUVALL

Family development stands in contrast to theories of individual development. Beginning in the 1940s an interdisciplinary group of scholars considered the first models of family life cycle theory. By 1957, one of these scholars, Evelyn Duvall, utilized census data to propose the first complete family life cycle model. Although a variety of alternatives to this model have been advanced during the last 50 years, Duvall's model is widely used today. It remains one of the most popular and well-known models of family development.

According to Duvall, families progress through eight stages: getting married, childbearing, preschool years, school-age years, teenage years, launching, middle-aged parents, and aging family members. During each stage of development, she identified a variety of tasks families have to complete before progressing successfully to the next stage of development (Duvall, 1988; Duvall & Miller, 1985).

CRITIQUE

As issues of diversity have gained greater recognition within the human sciences, a growing body of scholars have endeavored to critique the ways in which developmental theories have failed to consider the unique life experiences of people of color. There is much debate regarding the extent to which racial and cultural variations necessitate changes in the underlying assumptions, concepts, and conclusions of major developmental theories (Mattessich & Hill, 1987; Norton, 1983; Phinney & Rotheram, 1987). There are those who have argued that these theories fail to address racial, ethnic, and cultural variations and that this undermines the credibility and overall applicability of these theories. Others have asserted that these theories are based on universal processes that transcend racial and cultural variations. A number of cross-cultural studies have in fact demonstrated that many of the concepts and processes that Freud, Erikson, Piaget, and Kohlberg identified apply to individuals irrespective of cultural variations. The cultural biases of Duvall's family life cycle theory are more obvious and the theory has been much criticized for its heavy reliance upon culture-specific assumptions about what constitutes a family, the experiences families will have, and when these will occur (Aldous, 1990; Mattessich & Hill, 1987; Rodgers & White, 1993).

As cited by Gibbs and Huang (1998):

While maturational processes are undeniably universal and occur with only minor variations across racial and cultural groups, many social science researchers have shown that these processes are subject to wide ethnic variations in their behavioral manifestations, their symbolic meanings, and their societal responses. (Phinney & Rotheram, 1987, p. 5)

The value of the position Gibbs and Huang have advocated is that it recognizes the universal basis of many of the underlying processes associated with major developmental theories, while also acknowledging that there may be important variations based on race and ethnicity. For instance, all children may indeed advance through the four biologically based stages of cognitive development that Piaget identified, and yet there may be critical racially based variations between groups of children that affect how these advances occur.

Despite the fact that the developmental processes identified by the major individual theories have a genetically grounded dimension that is not culture specific, social contexts inevitably play a role in shaping how these processes occur. For this reason, when applying these theories to an individual or members of a group, it is important to have some understanding of their social context. Unfortunately, none of these theories addresses this issue in a meaningful way. Even in the case of Erikson's theory, where the social context is an integral concept, little attention is given, for example, to exploring the effects that the societal devaluation of people of color has on healthy ego identity development.

A more comprehensive understanding of the developmental experiences of children and families of color requires some appreciation of the racial context within which people of color live. As the following section explicates, this is a context that is overwhelmingly characterized by racial devaluation.

DEVALUATION

For children and families of color residing within the United States, theirs is an existence that has always been and continues to be confined to this nation's borderlands. Despite impressive political, economic, educational, and social gains over the past several years, people of color are still regarded as "other" by a society that built its wealth and secured its position of power in the world on the backs of generations of people of color.

To make room for the white colonial invaders, countless indigenous peoples were forcibly removed from their homes and more often than not, were simply murdered as a way of making the land "safe" for the white Christian settlers. To feed the ravenous appetite of a newly emerging market economy, millions of Africans were ripped away from the bosom of their homes only to have their blood, sweat, and tears fertilize the Southern crops that supplied the Northern factories upon which our modern American economy was founded.

While it may be tempting and consoling to reflect upon the history of this nation with pride and nostalgia regarding our many great accomplishments, we must also acknowledge that our beauty is tempered by our ugliness, our compassion by our cruelty, our pride by our shame. Just as we have freedom, liberty, and equality as venerable legacies that powerfully shape our modern American character, we must also recognize that racism, elitism, and xenophobia are a part of the legacy that has molded our national identity. As much as we believe that life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness are inalienable individual rights, we also comfortably deny these rights to entire groups. The ease with which this occurs stems from a deeply held, often unconscious belief that people of color do not qualify for these rights because they somehow are a little less than human.

Within this society, to be anything less than human is tantamount to "not being." As a society, we are incapable of recognizing the beinghood of anyone who is not human, as evidenced by our indescribably cruel treatment of nonhuman animals. Our careless disregard

for other life forms is routinely justified with a dismissive and flippant, "But they're not human," which translates into, "they do not exist as beings, only as thoughtless, feelingless, unaware objects." An object cannot think or feel. Any object has not a soul, does not form relationships with other living beings, and has no sense of self-awareness. An object is just a thing (Spiegel, 1996).

In the dominant schema of Western ideology, anyone who is not fully human is no better than an object and is surely treated as such. Objects are treated with flagrant disregard because they are incapable of experiencing pain or hurt. In this society, to be deemed an object is to be automatically relegated to a status whereby issues of equal treatment are irrelevant. One of the notable achievements of the U.S. system of government is that we grant equality and justice to all, but the catch is that these "all" include only those who are recognized as fully human. As this nation's history reveals, long before we embraced the noble virtues of equality and justice, we were consumed by a virulent form of racism that categorically denied the humanity of people of color. What better evidence of this can be found than in our most sacred document, the Constitution, that guaranteed the virtues of freedom, liberty, and equality, but denied these to blacks on the grounds that they were three-fifths of a human being.

While our ignorance and cruelty have evolved over the past 200 years and no longer are as blunt and audacious as they once were, they remain within us nonetheless. This part of ourselves we must see. If we are ever to have any hope of becoming the just and noble society we claim ourselves to be, all of us, white, brown, black, and all the shades in between, must begin by seeing the ways in which an ideology of otherness, hatred, and dehumanization toward people of color continues to shape contemporary life in the United States.

A survey of contemporary U.S. society reveals numerous examples of how we objectify people and devalue people of color by assaulting and/or denying their humanity—their beinghood. One of the ways this occurs is through language. The power of language to construct reality is undeniable. Language gives meaning to our experience. According to Moore (1992), "Language not only expresses ideas and concepts, but it actually shapes thought. If one accepts that our dominant white culture is racist, then one would expect our language—an indispensable transmitter of culture—to be racist as well" (p. 331).

For children and families of color in the United States, the very act of hearing common everyday expressions of speech involves the systematic socialization that one is inherently inferior or bad. In fact, linguistic devices that devalue people of color are so commonplace that most of us never think about them consciously. When we are forced to focus on the underlying connotation of these words and phrases, it is typical for most people, including people of color, to respond with skepticism, "Oh, it's just an expression," "It doesn't mean anything," "It's a reference to a color not a racial group." These refrains speak to how deeply ingrained negative valuations of blackness and darkness are in the minds of most people, including people of color.

The devaluation of people of color also is manifest through one of our society's most powerful institutions, the media. The power of the media cannot be overemphasized. It both reflects and creates our culture. It is both a mirror and a chisel, simultaneously carving the nuances of our social identity while projecting the image of who we are back to ourselves. Whether one is surveying films, television shows, magazines, print and electronic advertisements, or any other form of media, the representation of people of color remains constant. Most images reflect whites, and when people of color are represented, more often than not these depictions are unidimensional and stereotypical. The messages

that children of color receive are that they either do not exist in the world at large, or they exist only in negative ways.

At almost every turn, children and families of color are confronted with systematic devaluation. When children go to school, they generally learn history lessons that deny the contributions of their ancestors, they read textbooks that do not depict people who look like them, and the food they are served in the cafeteria is not like the food they eat at home. When they go shopping they have to contend with being followed and harassed for crimes they did not commit, buying products that do not have pictures on the covers that look like them, and shopping around to find stores that specially carry the types of foods, styles of clothes, and health and beauty supplies that are designed with them in mind. When they go to the movies, they will have to rush to see the few films that have racial relevance to them because these mysteriously disappear from theaters almost as soon as they are released. In other words, in addition to coping with any number of "normal developmental struggles," the realities of racial devaluation create unique developmental dilemmas for children and families of color. Consequently, a framework is needed that acknowledges these unique dilemmas and illuminates how they can be conceptualized and addressed within the context of existing developmental theories.

UNIQUE DEVELOPMENTAL TASKS FACING PEOPLE OF COLOR: A SUPPLEMENTAL FRAMEWORK

The following section presents a supplemental framework for conceptualizing the unique developmental tasks faced by children and families of color in a society that devalues them. This framework is not intended to replace more traditional models of individual and family development, but rather to augment them. In addition to considering how children of color, like white children, must negotiate the transition from one psychosexual or psychosocial stage to the next, or the advancement from one stage of cognitive or moral development to the next, or how a family evolves from one life cycle stage to another, we would encourage a consideration of how the unique developmental tasks outlined in the following section interact with these more traditionally recognized developmental processes. Hence, the framework proposed below is intended to supplement traditional developmental theories.

NEGOTIATING THE DILEMMAS OF SILENCE AND OF SPEAKING

Objectification and devaluation, as stated previously, are similar processes, if not the same. Both involve assaulting and/or stripping a person or group of their beinghood. When this occurs, silencing is inevitable. Silencing involves denying a person or group their "voice." The term *voice* is a metaphor for the ability to define one's experience for one's self and to speak on one's own behalf. Obviously, having a voice threatens the process of objectification. The presence of a voice challenges the reality that one is an object. After all, objects cannot speak. Objects have no self-awareness, they lack the capacity to think and feel, let alone to speak. The mere act of speaking, irrespective of what one speaks about, defies the notion that one is an object. Moreover, the act of speaking poses the threat that one may choose to speak directly against the notion that she or he is an object. For this reason, from the perspectives of oppressive systems, the process of silencing plays a crucial role in ensuring that transformation of beings into things.

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There is a powerful historical precedent for the silencing of people of color in this country. From the first cross-racial encounter that occurred on these shores, whites have lashed out brutally against people of color who have dared to speak on their own behalf and who have challenged white dominance. It was common practice to mutilate and even kill those persons of color who dared to speak. Even nonverbal forms of speaking were prohibited, as in the case of a person of color daring to look a white person in the eyes. Such an act defied the notion that one lacked subjecthood. It was an act of resistance against the notion that people of color lacked a self and a soul.

The denial of the right to vote and access to educational opportunities are clear examples of how institutional barriers were created to silence people of color. After all, without the right to vote, the interests of groups of color were not represented politically, which effectively denied their voices. Similarly, preventing access to a meaningful education was tantamount to silencing since the knowledge and skills that come with an education often are necessary preconditions for "being heard."

Despite the gains of civil rights legislation during the second half of the twentieth century, the silencing of people of color remains a deeply entrenched artifact of racial oppression and devaluation. Today, as was true during earlier periods, "silence is golden." A person of color who is silent is in one sense safer than one who dares to speak, at least to the extent that safety is defined in pragmatic ways (i.e., physical, economic, political). Many parents of color realize this and therefore strive to protect their children by teaching them to conform to the rules that demand silence, rather than resist them. I (KVH) still recall my mother telling me as a child, "you'd better watch that mouth, one day it's going to get you in trouble." I now understand that what my mother was really saying was that she feared for me as a black man in this society because she knew all too well that my verbosity put me at risk. She rightfully feared that I would be punished if I did not learn how to modulate my voice appropriately.

At the same time that there are benefits associated with conforming to the rules around silence, there also are costs. Not having access to one's voice is the essence of feeling powerless and hopeless. When persons or groups are unable to speak for themselves, a small piece of their soul dies. They are forced to bear witness to the murder of their own beinghood, which is devastating. Herein resides the dilemma. Those who speak up and resist the silencing process risk losing their lives or opportunities that are critical to their physical survival. Yet for those who remain silent and do not speak up, each time a little more of their soul dies. It is the essence of a double bind.

The dilemmas of silence and of speaking pose complex developmental challenges. In addition to negotiating the developmental tasks specified in Freudian, Eriksonian, Piagetian, Kohlbergian, or family life cycle theories, children and families of color must negotiate the dilemmas of silence and of speaking. Parents of color are faced with the difficult job of trying to teach their children how to attain a healthy balance in the midst of an unhealthy situation. If they are successful, they will find ways to help their children learn when it is vital to remain silent and when they can dare to take a few carefully calculated steps toward speaking. This is a job that is daunting to many parents of color because they either have not worked this out successfully for themselves, or because their fear for the children is so great that it overrides their capacity to approach this issue in a meaningful way.

Annie, who is African American, remembers that she was seven years old when she was first confronted with the dilemmas of silence and of speaking. She lived in Little Rock, Arkansas, with her parents and two younger sisters. The city had just integrated the schools

for the first time, and when Annie set out on her historic journey to school that first day, she did so with her father firmly by her side. She remembers that she felt safe with him by her side. She liked it. But as they approached the new school, Annie could see a mob of white people standing outside. They looked angry and hateful. She could feel the hate in their eyes as she and her father drew closer to the front doors of the school. "Nigger go home," a white man shouted from the crowd. And then suddenly Annie saw something come hurling from the crowd. It smashed into her father's clean yellow shirt that her mother had pressed that morning. It was a tomato and it made a horribly red, pulpy mess across her father's shirt. Then suddenly a second hit. This time a tomato smashed into the side of Annie's head. She could feel the cold pulp running into her ear. Annie's fear was immediately flushed over by rage. How dare these people treat her and her father so disrespectfully. They'd be sorry for this. Her father, the man she had revered since she was old enough to say "daddy" wouldn't take this. He was the strongest, most noble man she had ever known. But what was happening? Her father simply looked down at his shirt and then at Annie's hair. He wiped them both and then he pressed forward. He never said a word! Annie was horrified. He never said a word! Suddenly he looked smaller to her, weaker, sadder. Annie wanted to say something, to shout at her father, "Say something!" She wanted to shout at the people in the crowd. But she, like her father, never said a word.

Annie was a grown woman when she told this story for the first time. Telling the story was critical because it represented the key moment in her life when she was first faced with the dilemmas of silence and of speaking. Telling the story also was critical because it allowed her to speak for the first time about a painful experience that had remained buried for years. As that seven-year-old child, Annie witnessed her father's silence in the face of injustice and it both enraged and defeated her. For years she felt secretly angry with her father for not speaking up. While she understood the threat the crowd presented, as a child who needed to believe her father was strong and powerful, it destroyed a piece of her to see his silence, which she equated with weakness. Yet like her father, she learned that day to remain silent in the face of degradation and pain. It was a lesson she resented her entire life, but she had learned it nonetheless, and while it helped her survive more than 20 years with white teachers, professors, employers, and neighbors, at a deeper, much harder to see place within her, she had suffered terribly with the wounds associated with silence.

As a grown woman and as a mother of two children, Annie found herself struggling with the task that requires her to teach her children how to negotiate the dilemmas of silence and of speaking. When Annie first came to therapy with sons who were 8 and 11, it was clear she was struggling. She was frustrated with her older son, whom she described as "quiet and angry and always listening to that trashy rap music and fussin' about having to pull his pants up." She routinely reprimanded her youngest for what seemed to be "typical eight-year-old" antics (note the developmentally based description). For example, at one point he got up to try and look through the one-way mirror. Annie promptly told him that was none of his business and he'd better sit down immediately. This interaction is typical of many we see with African American families and other families of color. Because of the dilemmas of silence and of speaking, many parents of color greatly restrict their children's freedom and mobility out of their fear for their safety. They realize that their children do not have the same degrees of freedom that white children have, and from an early age, they begin to socialize their children to censor their freedom of expression. At stages and ages of development where the preponderance of theories suggest it is natural and healthy for children to engage in an exploration of their world, to be curious and experiment, many

parents of color feel the need to greatly restrict their children's boundaries. While on one hand, the realities of living in a racially oppressive society necessitate this socialization, on the other hand, it can foster feelings of fear, rage, and insecurity in children.

The loud, obstreperous behavior sometimes observed in teenagers of color often can be linked back to highly restricted childhoods where many of them felt so confined and suffocated that they feel compelled to lash back as a form of protest when they enter adolescence. But, of course, assuming this defiant stance of speaking loudly has an associated price, the very thing their parents fearfully tried to protect them against. It is not uncommon for adolescents of color to be suspended or expelled from high school at two to three times the rate of their white counterparts. The arrest and conviction rates for criminal wrongdoing are disproportionately higher among teens of color compared with whites. Unless we believe that teens of color are just worse than white teens, these are but a few tangible examples of the price many teens of color pay for speaking up. And among those who do not speak, the price is still high, although in other ways. Consider, for example, that Annie's father died at age 39 of a massive heart attack, and that she, like too many African Americans, suffers from hypertension. The dilemmas of silence and of speaking create a double bind that children and families of color must struggle to negotiate at the same time that they must contend with the myriad of other "normal developmental tasks."

Therapists can play a pivotal role in helping parents of color to help their children negotiate the dilemmas of silence and of speaking. The first step often entails helping parents to "voice" their concerns about their children's use of their own voices. In other words, many parents of color greatly fear the repercussions their children encounter if they dare to have a voice in public. This fear leads them to begin early on to teach their children how to contain and suppress their voices in the private spaces of their homes and communities, with the hope that this early learning will translate into an appropriate level of restraint once their children enter the more public spaces of the broader society (e.g., schools, shopping malls, job sites). Therapists can create a "safe space" in therapy where parents can begin to challenge their own silence by speaking of the ways in which they worry about their children's safety. Helping parents begin to express their fears and worries is a critical initial step in helping them eventually help their children to negotiate successfully the dilemmas of silence and of speaking.

As parents give voice to their fears, they experience directly the healing power associated with being able to assert one's voice and to name one's experience. They have the opportunity to feel how vital it is for their children to have similar opportunities. By recognizing the value in being able to speak, parents can wrestle with the complexities associated with their need to have their children learn how to be silent, and their need to have their children learn how to speak on their own behalf. Ultimately, it is important for therapists to imagine and explore ways in which their children can master the art of balancing silence with speaking, which includes knowing when to hold back and knowing when to assert one's voice. This balancing requires the development of good assessment skills in terms of being able to determine when it is best to not speak versus when there are latitudes that may support taking a calculated risk.

Therapists can also help parents explore ways of teaching their children to become "cultural ventriloquists." This involves learning how to assert one's voice indirectly, through a channel that is not obviously linked to the projecting source. One technique that we often use in therapy with adolescents involves asking them to bring in a song that they feel represents them and their lived experience. For example, at our request, Annie's oldest son

Dwayne brought to therapy a song by the late rap artist 2 Pac entitled "Trapped." We asked him to play the song in therapy and then explain to his mother why he connected with it. Dwayne explained that through the song, 2 Pac was expressing the frustration many young black males experience by virtue of living in a racist society that does not value them as human beings. According to Dwayne: "2 Pac understands what it's like. It's like we're trapped with no room to breathe, no space to live. No one wants to hear what we have to say, or even wants us to be here in this world. Either we're not noticed at all, or when we are, it's just to get rid of us."

The song Dwayne played in therapy "gave voice" to his sense of voicelessness. Through the song, he was able to speak about the ways in which he felt silenced. Through the song, Dwayne asserted his voice and shared with his mother the struggles and frustrations he felt as a young black male. With some coaching, Annie was able to validate what Dwayne was feeling, and she talked with him about their shared struggles as African Americans. Most powerfully, Annie was able to articulate her worries as a black mother who feared for her son's safety, while at the same time recognizing how critical it was for Dwayne to find avenues for expressing himself and for exploring and asserting his identity in spite of the forces that threatened to suppress and limit this exploration process. Similar to what Dwayne was able to find through 2 Pac and his songs, therapists and parents can encourage children and adolescents of color to utilize socially acceptable avenues (e.g., sports, performing arts, music, writing) for "channeling their voices" and balancing the dilemmas of silence and of speaking.

NEGOTIATING THE DILEMMA OF RAGE

When a person or group is systematically silenced and their beinghood degraded and denied, rage is inevitable. Rage is a natural response to pain and injustice (Hardy & Laszloffy, 1995). For people of color, the dilemma that rage presents is that few socially sanctioned opportunities for its expression exist. In fact, the unspoken rule is that people of color do not have a right to feel rage that is related to the ways in which the voices of people of color are silenced: their rage is also subject to suppression and denial.

Rage is an intense and potentially threatening emotion. The threat that the rage of people of color presents for whites is threefold. First, expressions of rage challenge the notion that people of color are merely objects since objects cannot feel rage or any other emotion for that matter. Second, expressions of rage, either implicitly or explicitly, implicate whites in the perpetration of racially based wrongdoings. Finally, most people are not free to observe expressions of rage without automatically associating them with violence. Hence, when a person of color becomes enraged, white people, in recognition of their guilt (even if this recognition is unconscious), fear that rage will culminate in violence and they will be the targets of both. For these reasons, whites as a collective, endowed with institutional power, exert a great deal of energy toward curbing, containing, suppressing, and denying the rage of people of color.

One of the ways this occurs is by shaming people of color for their rage. Common expressions such as "he's just so angry" or "she's hypersensitive" all serve to punish people of color for their rage. The hidden message is that their rage is not justified and that there is something inherently wrong with them for having this feeling. People of color are punished for their rage in more active ways as well. The high numbers of children of color who are removed from classrooms for "behavioral problems" are but one example of this. While there may be any number of reasons for acting out behaviors among children of

color, many times such incidents are related to racial struggles and race-related rage that teachers often misunderstand.

Because of the ways in which people of color are shamed or otherwise punished for their rage, many simply attempt to suppress and deny this emotion. However, rage is energy and energy cannot simply be erased. It must be channeled or transformed. When rage is buried within, this energy builds until one way or another it finds a release. There are two primary ways in which this tends to occur. First, rage may be released toward one's self. A person can turn the brunt of his or her rage upon himself or herself, which almost always causes grave harm. The high number of people of color who suffer with addictions involving eating (sugars and fats), alcohol, and other drugs, as well as the alarming numbers who commit suicide or are afflicted with heart disease, hypertension, strokes, and diabetes are indications of rage turned inward (Hooks, 1995).

The second way suppressed rage can be released is in the form of an explosion that erupts after rage cannot be contained a moment longer. These explosions generally are directed at others. When these occur, the energy that is released represents energy that has accumulated over an extended period of time, which contributes to its intensity. Such explosions can range from verbal screaming to acts of physical aggression. The point here is that when a person or group is subjected to experiences with devaluation, it is almost a forgone conclusion that they will experience rage. Because rage is energy, it cannot simply "go away." It must find an outlet for expression. The task facing children and families of color is not a matter of how to avoid feeling rage, or how to eliminate rage, but rather how to find ways to constructively channel rage. The operative word is constructively.

Jose and his family had moved to the United States from Puerto Rico when he was 10. Jose immediately realized that he was an outsider in this new land. Back on the Island he knew he was dark-skinned, and he realized there were negative connotations associated with this, but he had never experienced the type of blatant rejection and dismissal that were directed at him in the United States. Here he felt a sense of isolation and disregard that felt so totalizing it was as if nothing else about him were of importance.

On his second week in school, the gym teacher said to him, "Hey little Taco, you'd better get in out of the sun, you don't need any more color." The bluntness of the comment and its offensiveness stung like a slap in the face. There also were the children who made fun of his accent and the girls who wanted to know about the fancy palm-lined beach resorts of the Island, as if that was all his home represented to them. At last Jose thought he would find some solace when he heard there was another Puerto Rican boy in school, Luis. He was devastated, however, when Luis rejected him, saying to Jose "You're black, not Puerto Rican."

Overwhelmed by his sense of racial and cultural isolation and denigration, Jose quickly fell behind in his academic work. His teacher assumed he was a slow learner and an unmotivated student, that is, until the day he physically attacked a classmate. At that point he also became a "bad kid" in the eyes of his teacher and the school. Jose's experiences reveal several important issues related to rage and children of color. First, Jose's story demonstrates how children of color are subjected to racial devaluation. But more important, his story illustrates how these experiences are often overlooked, misunderstood, or both by the very adults who most need to understand. For instance, Jose's teacher and the school principal never once considered the ways in which his difficulties were rooted in conditions outside of himself. Hence, Jose, not his conditions, were labeled as the problem. Consequently, his learning opportunities were greatly stifled. He was placed in a class that failed to access his

true academic potential, and he was burdened with demeaning labels that impaired his social competence. It should not require much effort to imagine the ways in which these factors affected Jose's cognitive and social development. Because of the dynamics of racism and devaluation, the positive, growth-enhancing challenges that would have maximized his development were replaced with shame, invalidation, and hopelessness.

While teachers and schools often misdiagnose the academic and behavioral problems children of color manifest, interestingly many parents also struggle in this regard. Depending on their own growing-up experiences, some parents of color find it extremely difficult to help their children to cope constructively with their rage. For example, Jose's parents were mystified by their son. They questioned him at great length and were extremely concerned about him, but they were unable to assemble the pieces of Jose's experiences to assess what was actually happening for him. This was, in part, related to their experiences as children. Jose's father also suffered as a child because of his dark complexion; and because his feelings were never validated by the adults in his life he was left to deal with them all alone. The way he managed to survive was by burying his feelings and avoiding them altogether. As an adult who had never learned how to deal with his own feelings of rage, Jose's father could not allow himself to consider the ways in which his son was enduring experiences that were similar to his own childhood.

With respect to Jose's mother, who had a very light complexion, she did not understand her son's pain because it was not a part of her own lived experience. Hence, for different reasons, both his parents were unable to provide Jose with the support he needed to understand what he was experiencing and to find healthy ways of dealing with his feelings.

Some parents of color are actively aware of and sensitive to their children's struggles with rage. However, their fear that their children's rage will invite punishment from the world around them propels many of them to move quickly to suppress their children's rage. Unfortunately, suppressed rage becomes more of the problem and not the solution. For example, much of Jose's rage was suppressed. Most of the time he appeared quiet and withdrawn. He rarely spoke with other students or participated in class. He did not know how to articulate what he was experiencing inside, so most often he said nothing, even when he was asked directly to explain himself. As a result, his rage remained suppressed most of the time. But rage is energy, and at some point this energy must find a release. The day he attacked another student was an example of the explosive release of rage that had been suppressed for far too long. On the surface, the infraction that invited his attack seemed so minor (the other boy had taken his pencil), but in reality it reflected an accumulation of rage that he had been holding for months because he did not understand his feelings and did not know how to deal with what was happening to him.

Therapists can play a vital role in helping parents of color to recognize and ultimately help their children appreciate that rage is a natural, healthy response to pain and injustice, and when appropriately channeled, it can be a source of healing and transformation. They can also point out the dangers of suppressed rage, which can lead to aggression either directed at self (e.g., drug abuse) or others (e.g., violent explosions). Moreover, they can emphasize how certain "problem behaviors" are actually symptoms of mischanneled rage, which is closely linked to the failure to negotiate successfully the dilemmas of silence and of speaking. Clarifying this relationship is critical because it has important implications for how parents and other adults respond to children's "problem behaviors." More often than not, the response is punishment. However, the inappropriateness of punishment as a dominant response becomes evident once one realizes that what underlies "problem behaviors"

is almost always (mischanneled) rage and pain. As therapists assist parents in understanding the roots of children's "problem behaviors," they are better posed to assist parents in exploring responses other than punishment. In other words, they can encourage parents of color to work with their children to develop more constructive ways of channeling rage and of dealing with the underlying pain. In a related manner, parents can assume an active role in challenging others who may rely too heavily on punishment as a tool for responding to their children's mischanneled rage. For example, with therapy, Jose's parents became more aware of the roots of their son's "problem behavior." Aided by this understanding, one step they took to help Jose involved meeting with his teacher to explain that his behavior was a symptom of his suffering, not his defiance. They challenged her to see Jose as more than a bad, unmotivated student and asked her to create opportunities in the classroom that would help him deal with his sense of alienation, pain, and rage.

It is not easy for adults to teach children how to channel rage constructively. As a society we have zero tolerance for rage. Consequently, many adults lack a clear sense of how to deal with rage constructively in their own lives, let alone in the lives of children. Based on their own childhood experiences with rage, as adults, many parents struggle with how to help their children negotiate this complex emotion. Yet, it is imperative that they help their children find methods of dealing with rage such that it is not turned inwardly upon themselves or suppressed until it explodes, putting both self and others at risk. Such a balancing is difficult to achieve.

It is critical to bear in mind that the task is not "to rage or not to rage," but rather "how to rage." This creates challenges for parents of color who must resist the messages from the dominant society that are aimed at denying and covering up rage. They must embrace in themselves a powerful and threatening emotion as a way of helping their children to do the same. Therapists can play a critical role in helping parents of color work through their own rage so that they eventually do the same for their own children. Therapists working with parents of color can begin by gently encouraging these parents to recognize and name their own rage and to connect it to experiences associated with being a person of color in a racist society. It is imperative for therapists to model validating rage, normalizing its existence and affirming the right to have rage.

Once rage has been uncovered, named, and validated, it becomes possible to explore how one has learned to handle this rage. What pathways did the person develop for channeling rage and in what ways have these pathways been a benefit and a liability? For example, one benefit to the person who tends to bury rage involves determining punitive and disengaging reactions from others who feel threatened by rage. On the other hand, by burying rage inside, this person endures the full burst of this intense emotion, which can result in depression and/or various self-destructive behaviors such as drug use or suicide. Eventually this exploration should lead to experimentation with developing alternative pathways for channeling rage, specifically, pathways that are constructive in nature. For instance, during therapy, Jose's father was encouraged to develop a positive channel for his rage that involved volunteering his time to establish a local group for Latino youth.

As part of his service, Jose's father helped teach Latino children about their history and culture and he encouraged them to be sociopolitical activists for the rights of Latinos living in the United States. He also organized a youth conference aimed at examining issues facing "Latino Youth in Contemporary U.S. Society." These activities enabled Jose's father to embrace the rage he felt regarding his oppression as a Latino and to channel it constructively. More important, as he was able to do this for himself, he was able to help Jose

do the same. Jose was one of the most active members of his father's group. At the conference, he gave a moving speech about his experiences as a Puerto Rican male in the United States. Both their involvement in the group and the conference provided a vehicle for father and son to channel constructively the rage they felt in response to their devaluation as Latinos.

NEGOTIATING THE DILEMMA OF SELF-HATE

The dominant theme underlying the racial oppression of people of color is that they are inferior. We already have gone to great lengths to outline some of the major ways in which this belief is conveyed on a daily basis. What is important to appreciate is that when one encounters this message over and over, in almost every nook and cranny of one's existence, at some point it is inevitable that one will start to believe it. What we are referring to here is the phenomenon of internalized oppression. After being conditioned to believe that one is "less than," one finally begins to believe it, and the resulting emotional consequence is a profound sense of self-hate.

Expressions of self-hate can be directed at one's self in the literal sense, or they can be directed at one's self in the symbolic sense. For example, the alarmingly high black-on-black homicide in many urban areas can be interpreted as an example of self-hate directed at one's symbolic self. Consider the remarks of a young African American male, Kareem, who said:

This society doesn't care about us as black people. All they do is build more prisons and fill them up with us. Every time we see them put up another prison it's like they're saying they don't care about us. Like they want us gone so they don't even have to look at us. Sometimes just for fun, we'll just go down a few 40s and go shoot a nigger. Hell, there's nothing else to do but get bombed and waste a nigger. That's what they want us to do anyway. It don't matter, it's just a nigger.

Kareem's words are chilling. For those who do not live in the borderlands where Kareem lives, it is almost impossible to relate to what he's saying. But make no mistake, while it may seem hard to understand how deeply this young man and his peers hate themselves, their hatred is only a glimmer of the hatred this society has for them. Because this hatred is not directed toward whites, most whites find it hard to see all the ways in which society conveys this ugliness as loudly and as crisply as Kareem's words indicate. But he is living proof of just how clearly, persistently, and stridently this message is sent to people of color living in this society.

One of the most poignant and disturbing manifestations of self-hate among people of color involves the color complex. This refers to a color caste system that exists among people of color whereby distinctions are made about the relative worth and value of an individual based on the lightness or darkness of her or his complexion. The color complex represents the internalization of the same pro-racist ideology that establishes whites as superior to all people of color. Hence, the very ideology that results in whites unjustly discriminating against all people of color on the basis of skin color is simultaneously reinforced by people of color who value and reward those among them who are light-skinned and devalue those who are dark-skinned.

The use of spanking as a form of physical discipline or punishment (depending on your perspective) can be seen as another indicator of self-hate. While this practice is defended

with almost religious-like conviction by many parents of color, we believe it raises a number of complex and disturbing questions regarding the internalization of both the ideology and methods of the oppressor. Consider for a moment that during the days of slavery, the preferred method of disciplining or punishing (again, depending on your perspective) of slaves was physical beatings. Slavemasters believed they were justified in their use of force. This justification was rooted in their belief that they were mightier than their slaves and that their "might made right." Because they saw themselves as having authority over their slaves, they believed it was justified to use physical force as a way of bending slaves to their will. Many slavemasters strongly believed that if they failed to use physical force, their slaves who became unruly would start to think they had more power than they were entitled to have. They feared their slaves would not respect them and would begin to entertain ways of exerting greater degrees of freedom and autonomy. They feared their slaves would defy their will. Ironically, these are all the same arguments we hear when we talk with parents who believe in the use of physical force as a method of disciplining their children.

While there are people of all races who support the use of spanking, and while they will invoke similar arguments, this method of disciplining is especially prevalent among people of color, particularly African Americans. We think this is ironic and disheartening when we consider the historical record. There is something profoundly disturbing about how much those African Americans who defend their use of physical disciplining sound like the white slavemasters who defended their right to strike those whom they felt were their underlings. While this is undoubtedly a controversial point, we believe spanking of children is both an artifact of slavery and an expression of self-hate that is directed at the symbolic self (i.e., one's children).

As we have attempted to explicate, there are numerous ways in which people of color can manifest self-hate. The dilemma that self-hate creates is that for many people of color, the behaviors they engage in as an expression of this self-hate often appear on the surface to serve a more beneficial goal. Hence, in the case of parents who spank their children, the intended goal is to discipline children and socialize them to behave in responsible and appropriate ways. Individuals who fall prey to the color complex are often trying to find ways to elevate themselves and minimize their suffering. In the case of Kareem, who spoke of "shooting a nigger for fun," he was attempting to distance himself from his pain by shrugging his shoulders at it, as if to say, "Okay, so this is how it is, I won't let it get to me." Expressions of self-hate are complicated. Sometimes they seem like the only form of power an oppressed person can exercise. It is almost like saying, "Since I'm going to die no matter what, I'll kill myself before you kill me." Seen in this light, expressions of self-hate create the illusion of control and power.

At other times, expressions of self-hate involve playing along with the rules of the dominant society ("acting white") as a way of trying to reap the rewards of whiteness. From this perspective, self-hate is a strategy used to reduce suffering and increase rewards. The problem, however, is that self-hate, ultimately, is about destruction. Therefore, while it may seem more empowering to kill one's self rather than be killed, in the end, one is still dead. The same is true with respect to the phenomenon of "selling out" to whiteness by trying to pass. Despite the surface level gains an individual may obtain, again, one ultimately dies because one kills the part of self that is essential to the survival of one's soul.

Eddie was 18 and the son of a Lakota Sioux mother and a Mohawk father who were both killed in a car crash when Eddie was seven. His aunt became his legal guardian and because she believed it was in Eddie's best interest, he spent most of his growing up years

in a government-operated boarding school. There he received a marvelous miseducation that taught him nothing of who he was. The most significant mention of Native American people was found in his history books that told the typical Christopher Columbus Creation Story. Beyond that, it was as if his ancestors had not lived. The majority of what Eddie knew of himself and his roots had been fed to him through B-grade Hollywood movies that had taught him Indians were either savage barbarians or nearly mute idiots. The closest he had come to interacting with the sacred symbol of the Sioux, the Thunderbird, was in the form of the Thunderbird car his best friend was driving. There were the few words of his ancestral Sioux language that he had learned from his grandmother when he was only a few years old, but those were buried away with the painful memories of the boys who laughed at him when he used those words during his first few days of school.

As far as Eddie was concerned, his parents may have been Indians, but he was not. He had been raised by whites and with whites. He spoke like whites, thought like them, and even dated them exclusively. He would never consider lowering himself to date an Indian girl. He considered his white girlfriends as affirmation of his whiteness and the status associated with it.

To those who observed Eddie from afar it was easy to see that he was strongly white identified, and there was even the illusion that perhaps it was all right. After all, for all practical purposes he had been reared as a white person. Moreover, he seemed proud of his whiteness. He seemed secure and focused. The only problem was that underneath, in a place within himself that few could see, the other side of Eddie's infatuation with whiteness was his revulsion with his Indianness. Eddie hated all that was Indian, and therefore he hated a significant part of who he was. It would have been one thing if his love of whiteness had been balanced with a love of Indianness. But this was not the world within which Eddie was living. Because Eddie's love of whiteness was a mask that hid his hatred of his Indianness, Eddie was at risk of destroying himself, either literally or symbolically. There already were signs of this occurring.

On one occasion Eddie and a group of his white friends verbally harassed a young Indian man who had been handing out leaflets educating the public about Indian rights. Eddie was the most vicious in his attack upon the young activist. On one level this may seem surprising because one might have expected Eddie, as a fellow Native American, to have greater sensitivity to the young man. But because of the power of his self-hate, Eddie was becoming as cruel in his treatment of other Native Americans as the most vicious white racist.

Years later in therapy, Eddie eventually came to appreciate the relationship between his cruelty toward the young man he had harassed and his sense of self-hate. In retrospect he eventually realized he needed to harass that young man in front of his white friends as a way of proving he was worthy of their friendship. Because he never felt like he truly belonged, he found himself repeatedly acting in ways that were designed to convince his friends, and himself, that he did belong. The way he tried to prove this was by attacking anything and everything that was a representation of Indianness. He attempted to destroy all traces of himself as a way of proving over and over again that he was not who he was—that he was not the person he had learned to hate so deeply.

Eddie's story is so vital because it illuminates the dangers associated with not seeing and confronting the self-hatred that people of color are oriented toward. In a society that had taught him to hate and deny his Indianness, he was faced with the task of recognizing his self-hate and challenging himself to resist it, in fact to transform it into self-love.

The task of seeing, resisting, and transforming self-hate into self-love is nothing short of a countercultural act. The love of self requires an active, purposeful effort. For people of color, it is an act of will that stands against the thrust of the dominant social order. It is oppositional and boldly defiant and while it offers the promise of spiritual liberation, it also poses risk. To love is to risk because where there is love, there is the risk of loss. Daring to love one's self means risking pain and loss. Had Kareem dared to love himself, he would have had to risk the pain he would have felt each and every time another brother was gunned down on the street or carted off to prison. If Eddie had dared to love himself, he would have had to risk the pain associated with each and every time his Indianness was denigrated, marginalized, or decimated by racial hatred. If he had dared to love himself, he would have had to speak when it may not have been safe, and hence he would have had to risk the loss of approval, of opportunities, and perhaps even of his life.

Before therapists can aid children of color in transforming self-hate into self-love, they must first support parents of color in undertaking this transformation within themselves. An integral part of this transformation involves accessing the courage within "to speak," and more important, to give voice to the numerous painful messages of devaluation that all people of color internalize to varying degrees. Therapy can serve as a space where clients of color can name experiences, feelings, and messages they carry within them that suggest to them they are "less than." For example, to assist Eddie in his therapy, his aunt Rosa was included in the therapy.

During the second session that Rosa attended, she told the therapist she was disturbed that Eddie only dated white women. The therapist pursued this point by asking Rosa what meaning she attached to Eddie's behavior. After much effort, Rosa finally articulated that she believed Eddie's behavior emanated from a belief he held that Indian girls were not good enough for him. The therapist asked Rosa how this made her, as a Native American woman, feel. Immediately tears came to Rosa's eyes. As a Native American woman herself, Eddie's rejection of women like herself felt personal. Moreover, it tapped into a deep sense of pain she carried around within herself that related to all the ways in which she felt devalued as a Native American woman.

Rosa flashed back to childhood and all the times she hated her dark hair and eyes that never seemed as pretty as the little white girls with their curly blonde locks, blue eyes, and powdery skin. She spoke of the times over the course of her life that she received the message that she was the lowest among the low, worthless as both a woman and as an Indian. She recalled the times she had been rejected romantically by both Native American males and white males as a young girl and as a young woman. She spoke of the pain she experienced when her husband of almost 10 years had an affair with a white woman. It was not simply that he had been sexually unfaithful, but that the woman he betrayed her with was white. It reinforced every agonizing belief she has ever had about herself as being "less than."

With the therapist's encouragement, Rosa shared the litany of stories within her about the ways she had learned to hate herself. While her telling of these stories did not change them, the mere act of saying them aloud and having them validated initiated a process of liberation and healing for Rosa. With the therapist's support, Rosa was also able to access the profound rage she felt with respect to her devaluation. During the fourth session she attended, Rosa cried and screamed uncontrollably, releasing for the first time the pain and rage she had been burying within for so long.

The therapist actively worked with Rosa to begin challenging her stories of self-hate. She reminded Rosa of her own words: "I got so many messages that taught me to see

myself as worthless." The therapist used this to make the point that what Rosa felt toward herself was not innate or inevitable. It had been taught and learned. And in the same way, it could be unlearned.

Within the next few weeks, Rosa followed the therapist's advice and began reading books authored by Native American women. She was amazed how much she shared with these other women, but more important she found inspiration in the stories they told of how they had found unique ways of resisting self-hate. Rosa also reconnected with two cousins whom she had lost contact with years earlier. Through these reconnections, Rosa began to explore other ways of seeing herself as an Indian woman. She and her cousins began to recount stories of their childhood together that provided an alternative to the stories of self-hate that were strong within her. For example, Rosa felt joy when she rediscovered a forgotten memory of a time when she and her cousins, as young girls, had gone swimming together naked one hot summer day. They spent the entire afternoon swimming, laying in the sun on the grass, and brushing each other's hair. This was a long lost memory of a time when Rosa had felt her body and spirit were in harmony with each other and with the natural world. She remembered the feeling of peace and love she had felt for herself and her cousins. She remembered how on that day she felt beautiful and the touch of her cousins' long black hair in her hands was like silk. It was pure joy. This memory provided a powerful contrast to the other stories of inferiority, shame, and pain.

Gradually, Rosa began to develop a consciousness of resistance that was active and intentional. This consciousness closely scrutinized the messages of inferiority and worthlessness. This consciousness purposefully resisted the negative stories and guided Rosa in weaving together the stories of love and goodness about who she was as an Indian woman. Rosa began a journal in which she noted her daily acts of resistance and recorded her stories of love.

The initial session when Rosa had cried about the ways in which she felt devalued by Eddie's rejection of Indian women greatly affected Eddie. For the first time, he was challenged to think about his behavior in a new way, both in terms of how it might represent some piece of self-hate within him and also in terms of how it affected someone he cared for a great deal. It was the first time that Eddie saw his refusal to date Indian women as a symbolic rejection of his aunt, and, in some way, of himself. Eddie continued to struggle with what he had experienced during that therapy session, but his greatest challenges came when Rosa was able to engage with him directly about her struggles with self-hate as a Native American and about her concerns for him. As Rosa opened herself up, Eddie was given permission to access and explore similar parts of himself. This process was deeply emotional. It tapped into intense feelings of grief, rage, and shame, but with the therapist's initial support, Rosa was able to validate Eddie's feelings and stay connected with him as he worked through them.

Part of the healing process also involved Rosa apologizing to Eddie for the ways in which her own self-hate had led her to betray him, to not do a better job of protecting him and helping to teach him how to love himself in spite of the hate around him. She also asked him to join with her as she continued her journey to reclaim herself. One thing she asked Eddie to do was to attend a Mohawk ceremony as a way of reconnecting with the part of themselves that they each had lost. This also was a way to begin building a network with other Native Americans who could lend support in their journey to resist self-hate and nurture self-love.

As should be evident by this point, a critical relationship exists between achieving self-love and finding the courage to speak. One cannot live in silence and achieve self-love. Despite the risks that speaking engenders, it is an essential aspect of achieving self-love. To speak on one's behalf is a declaration of one's inherent value and worth. Self-love also requires the constructive channeling of rage. It is impossible to love self while being eaten alive by rage. Those who love themselves are able to use rage as a powerful force for positive transformation of their lives and the world around them. Hence, if it is not already clear, the tasks associated with transforming self-hate into self-love are inextricably tied to the task of negotiating the dilemmas of silence and of speaking, and the task of channeling rage constructively. The degree to which one is able to negotiate successfully the latter two tasks has powerful implications for how one is able to negotiate the former.

CONCLUSION

In addition to working through the developmental tasks associated with traditional theories, children and families of color are simultaneously faced with unique tasks associated with their racial devaluation. Further, the extent to which parents of color are able to help their children depends to a large extent on the degree to which they have been able to help themselves. It is difficult for parents to take their children someplace where they themselves have never gone. And yet, the health and viability of the lives of children of color requires no less than every effort from the adults in their lives to help them successfully negotiate the tasks they face as children of color that they must contend with in addition to all those other "normal developmental tasks."

Parents and other adults must act as cultural translators for children of color. Everything from watching television, listening to music, visiting the mall, going out to eat, attending school, participating in sports or other extracurricular activities, reading magazines or books, and simply walking down the street are all racialized experiences, and most of the racial messages embedded in these experiences devalue people of color. Hence, parents and other adults must become adept at helping children of color decode the underlying meaning embedded in this onslaught of messages, and they must provide them with strategies and tools to counteract this devaluation. They must act as a counter-cultural force that teaches children of color how to live within society while simultaneously developing oppositional resistance against the messages that society communicates about who they are and their appropriate place. They must help them learn how to achieve a balance between the dilemmas of silence and of speaking, of how to constructively channel rage, and how to transform self-hate into self-love. They must accomplish all of this as an integral aspect of promoting healthy ego identity development, the development of formal operational thinking, moral development, and the positive growth and transformation of family roles and relationships.

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