

Why White Privilege Offends You: A Poem

It was a cold winter night when I discussed with a friend
What made our lives different, but he couldn't comprehend
That in American society,
Unjustifiably,
He benefits from a thing called white privilege

It was by Peggy McIntosh that white privilege was defined
As an "invisible knapsack" that oppresses minorities by design
The result, as it seems,
Is that White people are free
To live their lives and be

...while their minority peers remain confined

So I wondered why it was that my buddy,
Let the concept of white privilege make him feel cruddy
But then it dawned on me
Like an epiphany
That white privilege theory should be
An area for me to study

Most White people don't see themselves as prejudice
And don't realize that white privilege doesn't exist
Because of the acts of one man
Or a "master race" with a plan
But rather the system as a whole
Designed to keep the power in white hands

Dr. Miguel Unzueta of UCLA
Conducted a study that concluded to say
That the knowledge of white privilege
Threatens a white person's self-image
And challenges one's value of personal success

So because people often look at racism
Through the lens of racist people
and not racist institutions and systems
White people grow to feel guilty
About the ways of a society so filthy
A society beyond their personal control

Dr. Su Boatwright-Horowitz discovered
That when white privilege was educationally uncovered
Most white students felt like "the bad guy"

While others chose to deny
That white privilege affords them daily benefits

Which leads me to Dr. Douglas Campbell,
Who attempted to discredit white privilege in a scholarly ramble
Alleging that white people have been stereotyped
And that white privilege is overhyped
In a nation where a black man is president

But Campbell has failed to notice
That despite his likely drive and focus
The opportunities that were available as he began his career
May not have been equally available for his minorities peers
And our country isn't free from racial differences

Because whiteness is seen as normalcy
Racial differences are dismissed inadvertently
As people claim to "not see color"
In an attempt to unite everyone with one another

"Colorblindness" was attacked by Dr. Derald Sue,
Professor of psychology at Columbia U
Who sees "not seeing color" as a denial of differences
And as a result white people are denying their privileges
Because their main intention is
To assert that we all the same, common
But that is simply not the truth

What else makes white privilege so difficult to discuss?
Well, minorities see white privilege as obvious
Boatwright-Horowitz found that minorities have a heightened sense
That white privilege exists and thus their defense
Makes white people less likely to discuss how they feel
When they could be attacked, if their views aren't ideal

Not all white people have the same exposure
To people of different races, due to their enclosure
In predominately white communities
That left them without the opportunities
To see how their own privilege makes their lives different

So what makes white privilege a subject of much stress?
Well America's institutional racism will take years to address
And until people realize that the system that's been built to oppress
Will take our nation awhile to defeat
Perhaps then we'll truly progress