

[Eschewing “identity politics” in order to build alliances for social justice]

The Absurdity of Saying “White Privilege”

By Teodrose Fikre on May 14, 2017

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I will admit, I was a part of the same crowd I'm now picking up a pen to speak against. I too once went around foolishly talking about “white privilege” this or “white people are evil” that. This was not too long ago; a time when I used to see justice through colored binoculars. I was part and parcel of the very divisive culture I thought I was speaking against. It took two years of hardship for me to finally shed my blinders and see injustice as it is without putting an adjective in front of it.

This is the wisdom I earned through hardship. Using rhetoric like “white supremacy” and “white privilege” is a way of stereotyping the whole of “white” people and lumping everyone into one group. This is the surest way to turn potential allies in the struggle for justice into adversaries; by doing so we end up perpetuating the very divides that the “system” depends on to split people apart. Moreover, it is a blatant lie that being “white” automatically confers some type of privilege. Just because some or even most might have it easier being a certain complexion does not mean all enjoy that privilege. True enough we have it hard being “black” and institutional racism is no joke; but there are tens of millions of “white” people who suffer generational poverty in the Appalachians and beyond that matches the poverty faced by “African-Americans” and “minorities” in the inner cities. Do we have to negate the suffering of others in order to show that we suffer?



I used ascribe to the narrow-minded rhetoric of statements like “white privilege” and “white supremacy” until I had a dance with misfortune and resided among the broken and impoverished for more than two years. What I witnessed were “white folks” along with everyone else who were so stuck in poverty that struggle became their normal. Can you imagine if I told some guy who did not have a high school diploma and was a

vagabond begging for change on street corners that he had “white privilege”. Anyone who says people who are poor on this level is out of choice is just as myopic as the worst bigot who says “black people” are

lazy. Poverty is not a choice, in most cases it is a sentence—a life sentence that “white people” serve along with the rest.

I only woke up to the ways the elites deceives us to fight one another when I got mugged by reality. What I have witnessed from South Carolina to Colorado and countless regions in between—as I sojourned from state to state and mission to mission—is this. Poverty comes for all and it does not discriminate based on the preposterous labels we accept from oppressors. The overwhelming majority of humanity is being ground into dust as the uber wealthy are literally kneecapping the masses into indigence and hopelessness in order to nourish their opulence. “White” people are victims of this global system of oppression too; we are better off uniting to defend our common interests than we are using myopic rhetoric and [turning co-victims into enemies](#).

Want to know why Trump was elected? A large factor can be traced to “white people” who wanted to have their grievances aired. They ended up turning to Trump’s “us versus them” campaign because they got tired of being blamed and never being heard. We rightly get upset when bigots use rhetoric like “black people are lazy” or “black people aren’t driven”. Don’t you think “white people” get upset too when rhetoric like “white privilege” and “white people are evil” ascribes guilt to all and condemns more than 60% of this nation as wicked and concurrently diminishes the struggles they go through? True enough there was a segment of voters who turned to Trump out of bigotry and hatred, but others voted for him because he spoke their resentment. To cast all Trump voters as racist is to feed into the division and to cast all “white people” in a certain light is to further injustice.

I was at Colorado State University not too long ago and attended a meeting of young “black” college students. In the crowd was a young “white” girl who was in attendance because she wanted to fight for justice. One person after another stood up and blasted “white” people for being either entitled or privileged. Each time I looked in her direction, I winced. Is it fair for her to be judged by association? What if this young lady, who wanted to stand for equality and fairness, eventually has enough and decides to be the next Donald Trump or David Duke? Why not lead with an open hand of friendship instead of pointing fingers and making enemies?



Notice by the way that I keep using quote marks on the labels “white” and “black”. That is because I realize just how injurious these labels are. These names we call ourselves and the designations of white and

black are insidious, but hot damn if they have not worked perfectly as intended. The words "black" and "white"—within the context of race—were constructs meant to ghettoize people behind the walls of contempt and "just us" in order to fracture humanity. There is not one person in this world who is black nor is anyone white; these words were imposed upon us by monstrous men who had everything to gain by dividing us. We defeat ourselves when we use these words that never came from us to begin with.

Over generations, we have accepted these hateful labels and made them a source of pride. Why do I say the labels are hateful? Go ahead and look up the definition of the word "black" on Webster's Dictionary. You will discover nothing but one slander after another; black is used to describe things which are worthless and insignificant. At the top of the definition, you will see that vile label black followed by words like dark, evil, and wicked. Most perniciously, black is defined as those things which don't have light. People have no idea, black is not an identity, it is a social position.



The word black is used to dehumanize us and to imply that we don't have God's light in us. Now go ahead and look up the word white in the same dictionary. You will see white described in the most glowing ways. White is defined as the full presence of light and it has also been affixed to people who come from Europe. White is defined as pure, clean, of good

character and free from blemish. As we are dehumanized, other groups are elevated and in the process the world is shattered into a battle between "black" and "white". This is how the 1% are able to conquer and subjugate the 99%. Watch the YouTube video at the bottom of this article for an in-depth breakdown of social constructs which were invented out of thin cloth to segregate society based on artificial labels.

Don't you see what these depraved oppressors were up to in the past when they came up with the constructs of "black" and "white". They were reducing our worth while concurrently elevating themselves to the status of heirlooms. Now I know some people will try to say "they don't get to define what we are, we do". This is absurdity of the highest magnitude, the word black was given to us by "them". Trust me when I tell you this, our ancestors in the continent we now imprudently call Africa were not calling themselves "black" before foreigners invaded and colonized the continent of *Ethiopia* and shipped off her children to live a life of chattel in chains. Google "Scipio Africanus" and you will be shocked to find out that we are calling ourselves after a man who was more heinous than Hitler who killed millions of our ancestor. Let that sink in for a minute.

By accepting the word "black", we accept inferiority. But too many people overlook this fact and instead choose to lash out and bang on "white privilege". But calling people "white" is the privilege itself! No one is white, the minute you say someone is white you might as well get on your knees and say "master"; that is the implication of the labels black and white. Black mires us in third class citizen status and white confers upon people from European descendants the prominence of the preferred tribe. Do you know what the word "negro" means? It's black by another dialect; is a word less insulting when it's spoken in English than when it is uttered in another language? if I called you an idiot in French, does an insult become endearing?

The source of our enslavement is within, this is why Bob Marley sang that song "free yourselves from mental slavery". Accepting our identity through the identification others gave us is nothing more than



enslavement. Words are super powerful; nothing in this world matches the potency of the tongue and the words that flow from it. By saying we are black, we speak inferiority into existence and calling others white confers superiority unto those who call us black. Sadly, the loudest idiots get the microphones; thus we are led by a herd of unoriginal thinkers and supposed intellectuals who convince us to get on bent knees and beg for acceptance instead of lifting ourselves up. There is money

to be made in race hustling and peddling grievances; actually teaching people to feed themselves and to know their worth takes away future customers.

These things have real life consequences, we spend all our time protesting outward while turning to rhetoric of hatefulness instead of mending from within. Like I said, I've done this too—I'm not speaking out of piety. We've been following the same playbook for generations; banging our heads into walls will not knock the walls down, it just leads to migraines and welts. Being given pains does not give us the right to pass on pains to others. Blaming the masses of our less melanined brethren and sisters for the sins of a few is no different than when a "white" person says all black people are thugs. Bigotry is bigotry—we don't get a pass just because we've felt a bigger injustice.

If you want to fight injustice, great! But for God's sake stop putting adjectives in front of injustice. Don't fight for black justice or brown justice—fight for justice on its own. Doing anything less makes you part of the very injustice you fight against. This system of oppression that is robbing hope from the masses and bleeding people the world over thrives through division. Its weakness is unity. So when people take to the podium to speak of "white privilege", "Muslim terrorism" or "Mexican illegals", they are feeding into the divisiveness which is fueling the fire of global oppression. In what world is it right to blame the whole of one group for the excesses committed by a fraction from that group? If it is wrong when we are all lumped together and characterized based on our traits instead of our character, it's equally wrong when

we do that to others. You can't get mad when bigotry reduces you only for you to reduce others and justify hatred and bigotry when you do it to someone else.

If you insist on saying "white privilege", take a drive down to the Appalachians or failing that go down to your local homeless shelter. There you will find teeming masses of so-called "white" people who are mired in perpetual hopelessness and indigence that will shock your conscience. Would you go up to a "white" homeless person and tell him he has "white privilege"? Think on these things for a second, would you tell a "white" child living in a trailer park who goes to sleep hungry at night that she has "white privilege"? [Click To Tweet](#)

I mentioned Malcolm X and Martin Luther King Jr. for a reason; both of them realized—before they were executed by the wielders of oppression—that universal justice was the only way to overcome the iniquities of those who repress the masses through coercion and manipulation. There is only one way to get to redemption and that is by being inclusive of all those who suffer under the boot of tyranny and economic injustice—this includes "white" people too. We need a big tent that does not exclude people

based on race or belief. If we do anything less, if we turn towards antipathy and vengeance, we become the very things we stand against. Our strength is our numbers, if we are not united as one, we will suffer and struggle apart.

You should always be leery when the elites and the establishment glom on to "social



movements" and start to push a message. 99.9999% of the time, this is an indication to walk the hell away. Thus, when Hillary Clinton and the ivory tower "liberals" start pushing "white privilege", take it as a sure sign the movement is a distraction. This is why I want nothing to do with the Black Lives Matter movement, not because I don't stand in solidarity with my brothers and sisters who demand justice, but because I know the nefarious reasons why [billionaires funded the movement](#). Once again, the establishment is using our pains to advance their political interests. The only reason the Corporate State Media and two faced politicians and pundits are pushing this narrative of "white privilege" is because they want us to be angered by the symptom of institutional racism instead of identifying the source.

Let me wrap it up with some "real talk". Enough of the nonsense, stop acting the victim and complaining about what the "white man" did to you and realize that they suffer too. I know some will cite examples and

say "white people" stuck in poverty don't have it as bad as "black folk" stuck in indigence—this is such folly. Poverty is poverty and those who are stuck in it have minimal chances to escape the clutches of destitution. Once someone is mired in homelessness and gets sentenced to a life of concrete mattresses and newspaper blankets, they have little hope to go from that level of despair to finding renewal. Instead of judging who has it worse and turning the suffering of people into abstract philosophical debating points, how about we stop seeing through color and just help people who suffer as we are best able?

But first, heal thyself. You can't help others before you mend within. Stop tearing others down from without, let's take a pause and find a way to fill our hearts with love rather than letting anger be our guiding flame. Loosen from our souls and our language hateful words and pejoratives like "black", "nigger" and "habehsa" given to our ancestors to dehumanize them and make them the lesser. Lastly, if you really do care about ending injustice and want to fight for equality, here is a radical proposal. How about we see both humanity and injustice without appending an adjective of identity or ideology in front of it. Be about universal justice or else count yourself a pawn of injustice. **#InclusiveJustice**



"If you have no confidence in self, you are twice defeated in the race of life." ~ Marcus Garvey

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**“Until you realize that we share a common humanity
and a common oppressor, you are not going anywhere.**

--Anonymous



Class and the Struggle for Social Justice in a Capitalist Society