Twitter Thread by Koritha Mitchell



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I've been publicly addressing white mediocrity since my 2011 blog post "The American Way: Mediocrity, When White, Looks Like Merit," but I learned A LOT from @IjeomaOluo's MEDIOCRE. As Brittney Cooper's @nytimes review said, it really is an invitation for society to do better.

Of necessity, that invitation requires unvarnished truths. A few of my favorite lines:

“When I talk about mediocrity, I am not talking about something bland and harmless. [...] I’m talking about a dedication to ignorance and hatred that leaves people dead, for no other reason

than the fact that white men have been conditioned to believe that ignorance and hatred are their birthright and that the effort of enlightenment and connection is an injustice they shouldn’t have to face” (6).

“Perhaps one of the most brutal of white male privileges is the opportunity to live long enough to regret the carnage you have brought upon others” (30).

“Nothing says ‘American’ like a boy making a woman struggle so that he can seem independent” (35).

“Mediocre, highly forgettable white men regularly enter feminist spaces and expect to be centered and rewarded, and they have been. They get to be highly flawed, they get to regularly betray the values of their movement, yet they will be praised

for their intentions or even simply for their presence—while women must be above reproach in their personal and public lives in order to avoid seeing themselves and their entire movement engulfed in scandal” (62).

Followed by security staff in stores & stared at when I attend social or work gatherings, "My entire life in Seattle has required that I navigate how whiteness refuses to acknowledge itself and yet insists on asserting itself whenever it encounters people of color" (143).

“Many of the hardships women face in the workplace are due to the overvaluing of white men. How many times in recent years have you heard the argument that a white man shouldn’t be fired for sexual harassment or other gross misconduct because it would 'jeopardize his future’ or

‘waste his potential’? ... To harm the trajectory of any white man—no matter how incompetent, no matter how many women or people of color he stepped on or groped along the way—would be a risk too large to take” (183).

“I do not know if [George Preston] Marshall would be happy with how quickly his racism was forgotten—it doesn’t appear to be something he wanted to hide, in life or death. But our society likes to make heroes out of some of our biggest bigots” (237).

“White male identity is in a very dark place. [...] I can only imagine how desolately lonely it must feel to only be able to relate to other human beings through conquer and competition” (273).