Maureen Redding’s chapter on invisibility versus hypervisibility is an excellent capture of regulated and normalized whiteness and how this oppressive structure works in tandem with male supremacy. Redding outlines the invisible structure of racial and heterosexual supremacy in her own life as a white mother through three examples, each of which take place in everyday settings (which ultimately makes it more disturbing) (Redding, 156). Redding unpacks the idea of the contradicting and paradoxical function of race and sexuality, two things which are both invisible and hypervisible dependent on who you are; white or black, straight or not-so-straight (Redding, 156). Essentially, Redding’s piece academically illustrates what marginalized people have been saying for years (decades, centuries, millennia, etcetera.), however with the #relatable retelling from the perspective of a white woman, it’s easy to understand how Redding has a farther reach than that of someone from any of those marginalized individuals.

Redding’s piece could very well be the twin of Peggy McIntosh’s essay *White Privilege and Male Privilege*. The topic is nearly identical in terms theme (Redding’s writing parts its hair to the left, whereas McIntosh’s parts it to the right, whatever) and even down to the language: invisibility playing a centric role in both pieces (Redding and McIntosh both wear matching outfits in family photos, it’s a twin thing). More or less, both pieces are speaking from the same place and to the same audience. Where McIntosh puts male privilege in the backseat behind racial privilege in order to self-reflect, Redding lets heterosexual privilege sit right up beside racial
privilege and punishes them both for enabling each other (Redding, 160). McIntosh also pulls from examples in her own life (quite the listable, Buzzfeed is writhing in jealousy) and Redding does the same but in a more of a storytelling format. Both women are white which means that their scope and understanding of race is more restricted and very different from say, my own. However, both women have a firm understanding of the functions of racial, gender, and sexuality based privileges.

Where Redding’s article more upfrontly addresses sexuality based privileges as cloaking and operative within the structure of male privilege, McIntosh’s is more implied just by virtue of using male privilege as a springboard topic (the two are somewhat linked by oppressive nature, birds of a feather etcetera.)

As a whole, Redding’s text drew me in from the first sentence, I already knew that her piece was going to be worth the read and check all the right boxes. Redding’s reflective and open dissection of race and heterosexual privilege is nice, it’s good and all other placating synonyms. Much like with other pieces I’ve responded to, there’s nothing overwhelmingly shocking or groundbreaking here. While she has good ideas and a strong grip on privilege as an institutionalized oppressor that requires constant attention and hyperawareness (Redding, 165) it’s nothing very new or awe-inspiring to me, as someone who lives in a different walk of life from that of Redding herself. That being said, I don’t think my opinion (what a loaded word) on Redding’s article is of that much importance, mostly because this wasn’t written for me. Like McIntosh’s essay, or Marilyn Frye’s Oppression, or any other white person writing from a perspective of their own privilege, those are not written to educate and shed light for me—their target audience is not those who understand and have lived what these white authors talk about, their demographic is other white people who go about
their days with their invisible knapsacks and their racial-blocking goggles and their pathetic excuse of a grip on racial, gender, and sexuality based privileges.

I don’t know about all the white people out there who read this, maybe this is all BRAND NEW INFORMATION™ for them (if you don’t read that in Phoebe Buffay’s voice just know I’m extremely disappointed), but for me this was another casual and comforting sip of tea: a white person confirming and reaffirming everything I already know. I don’t know if I’ll ever stop feeling satisfied with external justification like this, but gosh darn it it’s nice to have the voices that matter¹ essentially co-sign your thoughts and feelings. Do I wish minority groups didn’t need this kind of a helping hand? Abso-fucking-lutely². Are we at a point in societal progression where these helping hands could fall away and minorities would be able to stand their own? Sadly, no. That’s why there is so much value in white people and straight people turning the conversation on themselves, putting themselves and their own way of living under a microscope and picking apart the details that they so carelessly take for granted. I think the biggest takeaway from Redding’s piece is the same as the takeaway from every other piece of its kind: you can’t really expect more from a white person than what we got from her article (to directly quote myself).

It’s introspective, it’s well thought out, and it’s accurate. If Redding gets a clap on the back for being self-aware then so should I...and every other queer or coloured person or queer person of colour out there.

---

¹ read as: the people with all the power and wealth²
² read as: white people³
³ read as: white men
⁴ still not sure if swearing is a yay or nay, but Audre Lorde said...
Bibliography
