Sinead Scott

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QCQ#20

Quote:

“My experiences with call-outs began in the 1970s as a young black feminist activist. I sharply criticized white women for not understanding women of color. I called them out while trying to explain intersectionality and white supremacy. I rarely questioned whether the way I addressed their white privilege was actually counterproductive. They barely understood what it meant to be *white* women in the system of white supremacy. Was it realistic to expect them to comprehend the experiences of black women?”

Comment:

This quote comes from the article: “I’m a Black Feminist. I think Call out Culture is Toxic” by Loretta Ross. She is beginning to discuss her experience with our “call out” culture and how she has begun to avoid replying because, and she quote George Bernard Shaw, “’you both get dirty, and besides, the pig likes it.” I think what I liked about this quote was that it highlights a really important aspect of some of the problems that can arise from calling people out in ways that are may be aggressive though often with good intentions. In particular, as a white woman (so in the position that Ross was criticizing), I try and hope that I am, aware and considerate of the experiences of women of color. However, just as men cannot know what it’s like to be a woman in this society, even if they try, white woman cannot fully understand the experiences of woman of color because they have not lived it. This doesn’t mean we cannot try to understand and account for their experiences but because it is different from our own we will most likely get things wrong, make mistakes, maybe even offensive ones (though I would hope this not to be true). This is where Ross and I both seem to agree “call out” culture can be more detrimental than it can be helpful. If you respond to people who are trying to help, in a way that points out their mistakes and calls out what they are doing, it can lead to a defensive and mistrusting relationship. Thus, it’s important that we as people, regardless of our privilege or status, work to build people up, to correct their mistakes and be willing to be corrected, but to avoid doing so in a way which may further distance ourselves from those we are trying to work with.

Question:

Is there any time when “Call out” culture could have positive effects?