

WHITE SUPREMACY CULTURE CHARACTERISTICS

"This play is, in part, about whiteness and the way it operates in America. Each character is implicated... bear in mind that this is a white environment, and these characters are speaking to each other accordingly."

While this was written by playwright Will Arbery in the casting note for *Heroes of the Fourth Turning*, BLUEBARN invites audiences to examine the production from the framework of whiteness—how do these characters embody and portray white supremacy in order that we may see it in ourselves?

What is white supremacy culture?

"White supremacy culture is the idea (ideology) that white people and the ideas, thoughts, beliefs, and actions of white people are superior to People of Color and their ideas, thoughts, beliefs, and actions."

— "White Supremacy Culture," <https://www.dismantlingracism.org/white-supremacy-culture.html>

White supremacy culture "also extends to how systems and institutions are structured to uphold this white dominance." White supremacy culture is "... an ideology, a paradigm, an institutional system, and a worldview that you have been born into by virtue of your white privilege."

— Layla F. Saad. *Me & White Supremacy*. Sourcebooks, 2020.

How does white supremacy culture show up in our daily lives?

FEAR (the soil white supremacy culture is grown in): "White supremacy culture cultivates our fear of not belonging, of not being enough. Living in fear that we are not enough teaches us to fear others (or hate others) in an attempt, sometimes

overt, sometimes unspoken, to prove to ourselves that we are ok."

PERFECTIONISM: "the belief that we can be perfect or perform perfectly. The question has to be asked: according to who? Who decides what perfect is?... White supremacy culture uses perfectionism to preserve power and the status quo."

EITHER/OR (BINARY) THINKING: "explores our cultural assumption that we can and should reduce the complexity of life and the nuances of our relationships with each other and all living things into either/or, yes or no, right or wrong"

DEFENSIVENESS & DENIAL: reflects "our cultural dis-ease with truth telling, particularly when we are speaking truth to power."

PROGRESS IS BIGGER/MORE: "the goal is always to be/do/get more and be/do/get bigger. This leads to an emphasis on what we can 'objectively' measure—how well we are doing at being/doing/getting more—as more valuable than the quality of our relationships to all living beings."

"QUALIFIED": "Internalized primarily by middle and owning class white people, formally educated, who are taught by the culture that they...are qualified and even duty bound to fix, save, and set straight the world.... Closely aligned with dominant mainstream Christian ideology that teaches a Christian duty to convert the 'heathen,' the 'savage,' the 'impure'.... particularly violent both psychically and physically in its determination to ignore and/or erase the culture, wisdom, genius, joy of people and communities being 'saved.'"

— Quotes from Tema Okun: "White Supremacy Culture—Still Here (2021)"

For the complete list of characteristics visit: whitesupremacyculture.info.