

The 8 White Identities

By Barnor Hesse

There is a regime of whiteness, and there are action-oriented white identities. People who identify with whiteness are one of these. It's about time we build an ethnography of whiteness, since white people have been the ones writing about and governing Others.

1. White Supremacist

Clearly marked white society that preserves, names, and values white superiority

2. White Voyeurism

Wouldn't challenge a white supremacist; desires non-whiteness because it's interesting, pleasurable; seeks to control the consumption and appropriation of non-whiteness; fascination with culture (ex: consuming Black culture without the burden of Blackness)

3. White Privilege

May critique supremacy, but a deep investment in questions of fairness/equality under the normalization of whiteness and the white rule; sworn goal of 'diversity'

4. White Benefit

Sympathetic to a set of issues but only privately; won't speak/act in solidarity publicly because benefitting through whiteness in public (some POC are in this category as well)

5. White Confessional

Some exposure of whiteness takes place, but as a way of being accountable to POC after; seek validation from POC

6. White Critical

Take on board critiques of whiteness and invest in exposing/marking the white regime; refuses to be complicit with the regime; whiteness speaking back to whiteness

7. White Traitor

Actively refuses complicity; names what's going on; intention is to subvert white authority and tell the truth at whatever cost; need them to dismantle institutions

8. White Abolitionist

Changing institutions, dismantling whiteness, and not allowing whiteness to reassert itself

Cause of Racial Stress	Effect on Aspect of White Identity
Suggesting that a White person's viewpoint comes from a racialized frame of reference	Challenge to objectivity
People of color talking directly about their own racial perspectives	Challenge to White taboos on talking openly about race
People of color choosing not to protect the racial feelings of white people in regards to race	Challenge to White racial expectations and need/entitlement to racial comfort
People of color not being willing to tell their stories or answer questions about their racial experiences	Challenge to the expectation that people of color will serve White people
A fellow White person not providing agreement with one's racial perspective	Challenge to White solidarity
Receiving feedback that one's behavior had a racist impact	Challenge to White racial innocence
Suggesting that group membership is significant	Challenge to individualism
An acknowledgment that access is unequal between racial groups	Challenge to meritocracy
Being presented with a person of color in a position of leadership	Challenge to White authority
Being presented with information about other racial groups through, for example, movies in which people of color drive the action but are not in stereotypical roles, or multicultural education	Challenge to White centrality

CONTINUUM OF INTERNALIZED SUPERIORITY

OVERT RACISTS	HAPPY RACISTS	MAINSTREAM RACISTS	LIBERAL RACISTS	GENERATIONS Y AND D	ANTI-RACISTS
Ku Klux Klan.	Janet Helms, <u>A Race is a Nice Thing to Have</u>	In contrast to happy racists these white people do see racial difference.	Assume the white way of life is the norm	Pamela Perry, <u>Beginning to See White</u>	Do not see whiteness as the norm.
Hate groups.	White people who live in communities isolated from people of color.	Believe that white people are superior and people of color are inferior.	Value multi-cultural diversity but on their own terms. "I will accept you if you think and behave like me."	White youth recognize that white culture is not necessarily normative.	Value racial and cultural diversity.
Militia groups.					
Supremacists.	They don't have contact with people who are racially different.	Enjoy the power and privilege that white people have in this society.	Understand the oppression of people of color (power one). But act by trying to help, fix, or save people of color.	Form their own music, dress, and dance to create their own cultural identifiers.	Willing to challenge white power and privilege.
Segregationists.					
White nationalists.	Assume that being white is the norm and don't think of themselves as being white.	Blame people of color for their problems.	Don't address the realities of white power and privilege or power two and power three.	Because of their close association with youth of color they see at first hand the difference race makes in people's lives.	Will do power two and power three analyses.
	Don't acknowledge white privilege.	They are not interested in working for racial justice but will do things to keep the peace.	For some, image is important.	They are willing to dismantle white privilege and racial inequality.	Strive to be allies with anti-racist leaders from people of color communities.
	Unaware of and indifferent to legitimate needs of people of color.		Often want to look good. "See I am not racist. I am trying to help."	Many become activists.	Develop accountability structures with people of color leaders for their anti-racism work.