

Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

Why I Don't Write for White People

Natasha Marin · Saturday, October 1st, 2022

1. There's likely someone out there doing it better already.

Because upholding (read: fluffing) the limpness of White Supremacy is a group project and even if you opt out of doing your part of the cupping and the licking and the humming, *trust and believe* there will be someone who is eager, dare I say giddy, to step in and demonstrate how it's done. With enthusiasm. To pass around the proverbial licked-over-donut as though it is the tastiest of h'or d'oeuvres.



One time, I was helping a Black womxn colleague facilitate a Zoom discussion about the Black Imagination through a predominantly white academic institution and had invited a handful of Black womxn to participate with me on a Sunday before noon. I point out what time it was because if a Black womxn agrees to any form of Zoom-work with you on a Sunday before noon, you are experiencing both trust and generosity. The Zoom was supposed to be an all-Black space so our collective eyebrows were hovering near our hairlines when we saw upon entering that there were white people in there.

Turns out that the white people represented the academic institution that was supporting (paying us) to host this conversation as "research" and did not see the value in leaving us alone to be fully present with each other (as had been promised) and all but refused to leave the Zoom. After comparing us to pandas behind double-sided glass, I had to quite literally say the words, "We don't want none of your kind around here!" to appropriately convey how inappropriate their continued presences were in this space that was supposed to be safely Black-only in design. I screamed it, in fact in a loud fake Southern accent.

Later, after the Huites begrudgingly left us to our Black-ass devices, another participant spoke up. She said she felt immediately nurtured and protected by my fierce rebuke of their unwelcome gaze. She said that she felt like she was back in elementary school in the principal's office, in trouble, but the tongue-lashing I swiftly delivered had the same flavor of love in it as her mother's, whisking her away to safety. She thanked me, and others did too. Nervous laughter gave way to the slack laughter that moves easily between friends. But then, the most perplexed person was the Black woman whose job it was to play nicely with the white institutions. She felt hella conflicted. Her demeanor seemed to ask: *How do we evaluate our worth in a space that is not centering white people?*

All this to say that I don't have to write for white people because sure as shit stinks, someone has got that covered. Someone is already vehemently advocating for Britney et al. like dedicated possum hissing at anyone who might threaten to deprive it of some hot trash.

2. Because fuck them, that's why.

And maybe also because being offensive and/or eliciting pearl-clutching-gasps from onlookers is a secret fetish of mine.

I get discrete units of joy from saying and doing things that might give others lingering anxiety and/or ulcers. Something about being able to enact a quantum of freedom and liberation in the presence of actively being repressed and/or oppressed by a system that requires all of us to just play along for it to work keeps me contrary AF.

Propriety is a sham as is the compulsion to make white people comfortable even at our own expenses. I work against the almost primal need to perform propriety. I don't want to sublimate my joy. I've got Black Girl Magic and you don't, you don't, you don't! Also white people just make no sense to me in general with their delusions of being something other than light brown because melanin really does exist. How you swimming with sharks and cave jumping and putting your head inside a lion's mouth for fun, but still locking your car when you see a Black person walking their dog across the street? Ya'll literally stole us, so please quit trippin. The whites are really good at pretending that they're innately superior, their stories deserve to be centered and heard which is just weird because ya'll the newest out here on these streets with your divide and conquer tactics.

When I binge-watch stuff like Ozark Season 4, I have to sit back and really ask myself if white people will ever truly get along. What courage it takes for them to wake up everyday, with the histories of oppression all around them, just expecting to be treated with kindness and respect while allowing the dehumanization of so many others all around. Every Black person I know has shown sympathy and concern, even empathy for white characters and protagonists—we've been so fully and thoroughly indoctrinated over generations and have internalized so many negative views of ourselves that we scarcely know how to be comfortable around people who aren't invested in centering and comforting whiteness.

And we've all seen the TikToks of Black people complaining that we are never ever lonely because there's always a Harry or a Hermione waiting in the background with questions about where you, the magical negro, got your magic wand ready to nod like they know if you answer.

3. I'm allergic to money and success. Clearly.

My reticence to focus my energy on pleasing or anticipating a white audience is a practice...like going to therapy once a week is a practice. I prepay for my therapy so that I can hack my way beyond the inner immigrant mainframe that doesn't know if we can afford "these kinds of luxuries." But in the seven years of weekly therapy, several sessions have been about overcoming the need to validate myself based on my own productivity. I'm more than what I make and struggle to validate myself in a world full of likes and double-taps. This is why my therapist helps me to send invoices. She helps me ask the whites who I often work for as an antiracism consultant to pay me what they owe. She is a woman of color herself and sees me, her client, as in need of consistent support around valuing my own work. She points out my behavioral patterns and helps me grow in self-awareness.



Black Powerful: Black Voices Reimagine Revolution is currently available from McSweeney's.

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