Jack Gentsch

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Short Assignment 2

Dear my Pal Booker,

While recently watching my favorite movie *White Chicks*, I found that the film bluntly brought up many topics of race. By presenting many racial stereotypes throughout the film, *White Chicks* challenges modern American racism by satirizing racial stereotypes and provides for the means to discuss race in America. Knowing that you enjoy watching comedies in between reading about Marxism, I thought I would share my view of the film and hopefully we can discuss how *White Chicks* challenges traditional racism.

**Stereotypical Presentation of Caucasians**

Although I’m sure you will watch the film for yourself, *White Chicks* follows two cops who must go undercover as incredibly spoiled Caucasian girls. This allows the two to embody “Beverly Hills” stereotypes as well as African American stereotypes, and in turn establishes an interesting challenge against modern racism. When checking into the hotel under the guise of the Caucasian Wilson twins, Kevin and Marcus act incredibly angry and privileged – preventing them from having to show their ID’s to the undercover FBI agent manning the desk. Kevin and Marcus act so stuck-up because they are made to portray wealthy and spoiled Caucasian teenagers. The irony is that they are adult African American males – this clear juxtaposition provides a laugh for the audience, criticizing racism in the process. The stereotypes in *White Chicks* challenge traditional racism in America by satirizing our perception of race throughout the movie. By mocking modern racism, the film challenges racist values and allows the viewer to question society’s fabrication of stereotypes.

**Stereotypical Presentation of African Americans**

African Americans in the film are portrayed with extremely stereotypical views, with the undercover cops regularly slipping back into their “African American personas” unconsciously. Ranging from incredible athleticism to carefree usage of the “N” word, the two cops frequently embody African American stereotypes. The behavior of the main characters succeeds at challenging traditional racism simply because their actions are so ridiculous and racist. By fulfilling these stereotypes, the characters force viewers to question their perception of race in society and compare these stereotypes with what viewers see in reality. *White Chicks* creates a false image of race, and when contrasted with reality, it is apparent that these racist values that America still holds are ridiculous. The portrayal of African Americans in the film serves to mock and challenge racism, and in turn allows for a discussion of racism’s presence today.

Finally, one easily visible method in *White Chicks* that challenges racism in America is the wide variety of races present in the cast of the movie. The main characters are African American – something quite uncommon a few decades ago. This allows the viewpoints of African American and Caucasian characters to come together and adds to the dialogue involving race. Hopefully, Booker, you can see that *White Chicks* does an incredible job of pointing out the racist stereotypes that have been built in America today. These examples provide great evidence that this film succeeds at challenging the traditional value of racism, and I’m looking forward to your letter of agreement.

Yours always,

Wolf

Dear Wolf,

I had to watch this ridiculous movie of yours because I could tell that your argument was (as always) flawed. No movie with such a blatantly racist plotline, let alone one crafted the Wayans brothers, could include such a challenge on racism. In fact, I believe that *White Chicks* uses racial stereotypes solely for humor and, being a product of the Culture Industry, seeks profit over a critique on racism. The wealthy Caucasian female stereotype that you mentioned attempts to ridicule the wealthy rather than point out any sort of flaw in racism. In fact, it may encourage further stereotyping of this group. When the twins injure themselves in the beginning of the movie, they prefer staying in a hotel room to going to a weekend party simply so their peers do not see small scratches on their faces. This rather extreme decision does nothing to challenge the view of spoiled brats or dumb blondes: it instead seeks to make the audience laugh and bolster the film’s profits. The satire apparent in the film has the sole goal of making money, not challenging modern racism.

In response to the racial stereotypes displayed by the African American characters in the movie, these are clearly implemented into the movie simply to make a joke at the expense of African Americans. Your reference to dance moves is likely from the dance-off scene between the Copeland brothers and the Vandergeld sisters. Similarly to many other racist scenes in the film, the Copeland brothers display a large competitive advantage as African American stereotypes may suggest. You state that these examples of stereotypical behavior emerge in order to mock stereotypes and are meant to formulate discussions of racism. However, I believe that the Cultural Industry has simply ingrained these racist facts as humorous and are for comedic purposes placed throughout the film. *White Chicks* is simply a comedy that relies on extreme racism in order to maximize its income. By using racist antics for humorous effect, filmmakers are able to sell more tickets at the box office and will therefore utilize racism only to enlarge their paycheck. The creators of this film had no intention of tearing down stereotypes in today’s society – they instead utilize these stereotypes in order to garner profits from their ridiculously racist production.

One of the most racist characters in the film is Latrell Spencer, the former African American NFL star you failed to include in your letter. Latrell frequently falls in love with Caucasian women, and is racist against African Americans. Latrell refers to white women as snowball or cotton tail, but the only true racial slur he uses is against an African American cop: “jigaboo.” This word is extremely offensive, and to some is considered as offensive as the N-word. Latrell’s racist comment (used to demean someone of his own race) is only used to draw a laugh from the audience. Despite the multiplicity inherent in viewers watching *White Chicks,* it is unlikely that many viewers other than yourself will perceive that the film challenges American racism. Your perspective is tragically neither the intention of the producers nor that received by the public. *White Chicks* is merely a product of capitalist society, and I hope you understand that the casting and antics of multiracial characters in the film is only for the use of profit – not progress.

Sincerely,

Keith M. Booker