

# South Park Social Reality

David Marroquin

California State University, Los Angeles

*This is an observational paper based on South Park, a popular American television show. Theory is centered on the realistic humor proffered by the creators of the show and how humorous scenes throughout a particular episode are in fact realistic to day-to-day culture and a massive problem in society. Examples of particular characters created to represent various minorities in society are used in the article. It is believed that these characters act as reinforced stereotypical ideals of minorities and while exasperating these stereotypes creating a realm of humor set for questioning these stereotypes.*

<sup>1</sup> South Park, an Emmy award winning television show, on Comedy Central airs weekdays at ten o'clock, has been deemed with scabrous humor in the past; with episodes like "With Apologies to Jessie Jackson", "Trap in the Closet", and "Die Hippy, Die". Specifically on Wednesday January the 16<sup>th</sup> there was an episode entitled "D-Yikes". In this episode South Park writers depicted many different social and culture stereotypes that are controversial in American culture today. The writers made jokes about unemployed Hispanics, butch (manly) Lesbians, and the fashion style of Prussians. In making jokes pertaining to these minorities we can see

---

David Marroquin is currently a graduate student at the Department of Sociology, California State University. His paper was initially submitted to Soc. 301 Writing for Sociology, taught by Susan Friedman in Winter 2008.

how the American media and culture portrays minorities. The crude humor showed Hispanics standing in front of hardware stores trying to receive employment; Prussians decorating their homes with gold curtain rods, purple rugs, and depicting how they like to wear silk shirts and shop for sunglasses; and all lesbians as butch looking and man haters. South Park shows us how American egocentric values and culture depicts minorities in America with the realistic view of American society. The viewpoint South Park presents is that white American values are egocentric as no other principle or cultures are acceptable. This stance displays the hypocrisy of white American values and culture towards the treatment of minorities in society and on television. Lesbians were portrayed in the episode as being manly and having an attitude. They were shown as always trying to persuade heterosexual women to become

lesbians. This is seen in the beginning of the episode as Miss. Garrison is upset with men because they keep asking her if she is a man. The episode continues with a lesbian inviting Miss. Garrison to a gay bar and trying to persuade her to become a lesbian. This depiction of lesbians is significant because it shows how white American culture view women who are gay. As the episode continues, another minority is portrayed as day laborers-Hispanics. They depicted them as being able to be hired for any job because they are just day laborers and cannot say no. The portrayal of these two minority groups shows that America has minimal values because of the insults to lesbians and Hispanics.

This South Park episode was intended to show how white America is biased towards minorities in American society. The entire episode was full of satirical context about minorities and their values, beliefs, and virtues. For example, the biased way the show portrayed the Prussian community, as enjoying decorating their homes and businesses with hideous purple rugs and gold curtain rods. The episode perpetuated how biased white American society can be by portraying the Prussian men shopping at malls for silk shirts and designer glasses, and applying large amounts of gel after getting their designer haircut. South Park's

perspectives on minorities are a perfect example of American society's views, culture and virtues. With South Park's slanted humor on minorities, one cannot help but focus on the characters. The characters were fully developed to offend and shock, but also to shine a light on the portrayal of minorities. It was also about how their values and culture are tolerated but not accepted in American society. A closer look at the day-laborer character is a perfect example of how American society endures these people but does fully not accept them. Continuing to focus on American society, another outlook one notices is how lesbians are tolerated but, again, not completely accepted. Given this, South Park demonstrates the minimal values and virtues white American society has towards minorities and how they are endured.

The impact of this South Park episode displays how white American society perceives minorities. One can recognize that the values, virtues, and culture of American society are minimal when it comes to tolerating minorities in their country. South Park, with its lewd humor, has depicted the views of American society, but has used this type of humor so white America can see how misconstrued and controversial their views on social and culture stereotypes are in American society.