

‘Hiding in Plain Sight’: Irony Sexism and Irony Racism in Alternative Media

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Who Am I?

- PhD student (part-time) at CWASU.
- Women's experiences of victim blame from agencies following sexual violence.
- Paper on media representation.
- CBT therapist (HE).
- Recovering goth and ex-MM fan.
- Content warning: images on Manson.



Sexualisation in Media

- Concerns around sexualisation of media (APA, 2007; Papadopoulos, 2010; Bailey, 2011).
- The 'wallpaper' of children's lives.
- Women as objects for 'heterosexual male consumption' (Coy & Garner, 2012).
- Self-esteem, MH issues, eating disorders, unhealthy relationships and sexual behaviour (esp. girls).
- Alternative media has been recommended as a solution.

Ironic Sexism

- Range of terms for critiquing sexist tropes: fridging, Bechdel Test, male gaze, manic pixie dream girl.
- Ironic sexism: 'sexism with an alibi' (Williamson, 2003).
- Tongue in cheek, irreverent, 'edgy'.
- Suggests feminism is prudish, outdated and unnecessary.

E.g., Michael Scott in *The Office* (US)



Irony Racism

- ‘Satirical’ racist tropes in comedy and music.
- *Little Britain, South Park, Tropic Thunder.*
- Intersection with gender: Lily Allen, Miley Cyrus, Taylor Swift for ‘using’ Black women.
- **BUT are female artists called out more than male artists?**



Marilyn Manson

- Popular 'goth shock rocker'.
- Considered feminist, progressive: skewers heteronormativity, patriarchal norms.
- Embraces trans-identities.
- But...





Marilyn Manson

Tainted Love (2001)

- Mocking US high school party/hook-up/frat culture.
- Girls 16-18, band mid-late 30s.
- Young goth women: strippers, lap-dancers, school uniforms, cheerleaders.
- Does black hair, tattoos and dog collars make it 'alternative'?
- Stereotypical hip hop tropes: bandanas, 'goth thug', grills, flashy jewellery.



Marilyn Manson

- Dabbles in identities but returns to white, straight, cis male.
- Multiple accusations of sexual abuse (15 women).
- Sexual harassment AND racism.
- Jessicka Addams abused by Jordie White (bassist) in 2016.
- **Does ironic racism and sexism perpetuate negative messages about women, gender and sexuality?**
- **Does it allow abusers to operate and hide in plain sight?**

Overview

Sexism, racism or irony in media products?

- Who is the butt of the joke?
- Is it punching down onto people in marginalised positions?
- Who is in the position of power/privilege/central narrative?
- Does it replicate what it supposedly condemns?

In Manson's words: **"I am whatever you say I am."**



Thank you!



Questions, comments, thoughts?
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