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Response to Chapter 11 of the Bogle Reading

Black cinema in the 2000s had one prominent yet controversial golden star that defined the decade: Tyler Perry. Emerging from small Atlanta theatre in the turn of the millenia, Perry soon found lucrative success with what is called the “Madea movies,” a franchise that continues to this very day. Bogle however notes the criticism this franchise has garnered, specifically the “rigid, embarrassing types” of Perry’s TV productions that have even earned the harsh critique of one Spike Lee (Bogle 427). While I am not familiar with the Madea franchise myself, I do find Perry’s story admirable in how he had found such amazing success despite his horrific past. It’s an inspiring story, regardless of your feelings on his work.

The 2000s also gave way to some re-examinations of black history, including its darkest parts with the likes of Quentin Tarantino’s *Django Unchained*. Bogle cites much criticism the film garnered, and seemingly has qualms with the film himself as he states: “Ultimately, *Django Unchained* reaches the point where the blood bursts become cartoonish as is some of the climactic violence” (Bogle 469). He mainly explains that the film is overly graphic in both language and gore, with the former being about the very frequent use of the n-word by many characters. Given that Tarantino is white, I can understand where the critics, Bogle included, are justified in their criticisms. While my stance is not as justified, I do believe the film was faithful in portraying slavery as hideously as possible, which I feel is the way it should be portrayed. It also allowed the characters, both black and white, to develop into complex personalities as well. The standout for me is Samuel L. Jackson’s character, who serves as a twist on the Uncle Tom by being the main antagonist with selfish and malicious motivations. But again, I can understand the criticisms one would have for Tarantino’s historical gore flick.

Works Cited

Bogle, Donald. *Toms, Coons, Mulattoes, Mammies, and Bucks: An Interpretive History of Blacks in American Films*. 21st Century Edition ed., Bloomsbury Publishing, Inc., 1973.