

## EXPLICIT WHITENESS

*Stuff White People Like*

*A Definitive Guide to the Unique Taste of Millions*

Christian Lander

New York: Random House, 2008

*Reviewed by Christopher Donovan*

Does Christian Lander have our number? For a wide, mostly liberal swath of the white Western world, the answer is “yes.”

His observations about white tastes are so accurate, a goodly number of them apply even to this convert to white advocacy. While reading his book in the family room of my house on a fall Sunday, I was struck by how many of Lander’s items were within eyeshot: I was wearing New Balance shoes and a semi-ironic T-shirt (Items No. 94 and 84, respectively) after having gone for a run (Items No. 9 and 27), with an i-Pod around my neck (Item No. 40). There was a Sunday *New York Times* and several *New Yorkers* on the table next to me (Items No. 46 and 114, respectively), Netflix in the drawer below me (Item No. 39), a mug of coffee from earlier in the morning on the coffee table (Item No. 1), a bottle of water in my hand (Item No. 76), and, of course, a book — *Stuff White People Like* — in the other hand (Item No. 138).

Merely opening the garage door or walking upstairs would have put a dozen more items in range (Item No. 24, Wine; Item No. 31, Snowboarding; Item No. 61, Bicycles; Item No. 53, Dogs), and if I were to add the stuff preferred by just two or three family members or acquaintances, the entire list of “stuff white people like” would be covered, many times over.

Talk about busted. I started to wonder if Lander’s been spying on me, but this would have only branded me yet whiter (Item No. 126, Conspiracies; Item No. 149, Self-Importance).

I was a tad disappointed by my overall whiteness score (a mere 56 percent), but as I say, the “white people” in “Stuff White People Like” are the NPR-listening (Item No. 44), Volvo-driving set (oddly, Volvos are not on the list, but the Toyota Prius, Item No. 60, is) found in Manhattan and Brooklyn (Item No. 26) and small college towns in the

Northeast. Lander leaves out working-class whites, many Christians, and political conservatives (excepting perhaps the “crunchy cons” identified by writer Rod Dreher). In other words, none of Jeff Foxworthy’s rednecks (Item No. 8, Barack Obama—*White people like Barack Obama because they are afraid that if they don’t they will be considered racist*; Item No. 118, the ACLU).

So who is Christian Lander? According to the book cover and interviews, he’s a left-leaning Ph.D. dropout now living in Los Angeles who once taught public speaking at Indiana University. It was his wildly popular blog, *stuffwhitepeoplelike.com*, that set the stage for his book.

Mr. Lander is not, at least wittingly, a white advocate. He expressed revulsion at the popularity of his observations among posters at Stormfront.org. But as with the honest observations about Jewish power in the anti-consumerist magazine *Adbusters*,<sup>1</sup> sincere and principled gentiles from the hip left occasionally stumble onto the truth.

How can the following be denied?

*Item No. 2: Religions Their Parents Don’t Belong To. White people will often say they are “spiritual” but not religious. This usually means they will believe in any religion that doesn’t involve Jesus.*

Of course, Christianity is big for much of white America, just not the set Lander has focused his anthropology on. As for “I’m not religious, but I am spiritual,” I can attest that this is something I’ve heard many, many times—using those exact words—from whites in more-educated settings across the country. What these whites are saying is that it would be cool to practice heathen rituals in the forest, but that Bible study is starchy and repressive.

*Item No. 7. Diversity. White people love ethnic diversity, but only as it relates to restaurants.*<sup>2</sup>

Naturally. Now that a white left-wing hipster has called them on it, how will all the other white left-wing hipsters react? Perhaps by dryly noting, “Oh, those Free Tibet stickers are so Number 7,” cluing other

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<sup>1</sup> “Why Won’t Anyone Say They Are Jewish?,” Kalle Lasn, *Adbusters*, March–April 2004.

<sup>2</sup> This observation was made by Steve Sailer of VDare.com in 2004.

whites into their familiarity with Lander's book. Being ahead of the curve is indeed very important to whites.

*Item No. 11. Asian Girls.*

No argument here, although anyone who's ever laid eyes on Sean Lennon cannot seriously believe that the white/Asian mixture makes for attractive children.

*Item No. 20. Being An Expert On **Your** Culture. White people are pretty conflicted about their culture. On one hand, they are proud of the art, literature, and film produced by white culture. On the other, they are very ashamed of all the bad things about white culture: the KKK, colonialism, slavery, Jim Crow laws, feudalism, and the treatment of Native Americans.*

So, they make up for it by attempting to absorb the "authenticity" of any culture but their own. This regrettably goes far enough that whites feel compelled to adopt non-white (though rarely black) children from China and Guatemala, or move to dangerous corners of the globe where they sometimes get themselves killed in an attempt to prove their non-white authenticity. I call this the "Amy Biehl Syndrome," after the blonde California woman who ventured to South Africa to help blacks and ended up being killed by them.

Not that I'm so immune myself: I've volunteered for job placement in the Bronx and ventured to the Palestinian town of Ramallah, where I took a certain pride in being mistaken for an Englishman, because "no Jew or American would ever come here," as one local observed. As it turns out, my explorer impulse is only another item on the list of stuff white people like.

So is a book like *Stuff White People Like* good or bad for whites? On balance, my answer is "good." I am not so concerned about what Lander considers the truly negative traits of whites: they're anti-conformity hypocrites, they're shallow, and they hate anyone not like them. The mere fact that he's discussing whites as a group with generalized characteristics is subversive enough. No doubt some whites will be disappointed to realize that they're not so unique after all, but might they come to embrace white groupness? Take an ironic pride in being white, which might then stoke an actual pride? Stop and wonder why it's so taboo for them to even declare their whiteness?

Imagine that whites finally realize that prizing multiculturalism, diversity, and nature, and losing sleep over the fate of non-whites around the world, are specifically white things, and not universal values. The next step would be to point out that if whites, and only whites, practice these values, it puts us at a systematic disadvantage in our dealings with other races. If the other races take care of their own, and we don't, but instead worry about their interests too, we will trade our birthrights—our wealth, our power, our homelands—for a mess of moral superiority. But these mere feelings will provide little solace to our dwindling, dispossessed progeny who will come to exist at the mercy of groups who will go on blaming us for their failures even after we become extinct.

Lander's brand of ironic explicit whiteness may, of course, peter out as just another fad, but in a country where too many whites are petrified even to think of themselves as part of a unique human group with a right of self-determination, any ice-breaker is welcome. If you're not inclined to be ashamed of your New Balances, how far off are the bigger thoughts about the state of your race?

*Christopher Donovan is the pen name of an attorney and former journalist whose writing has appeared in the **Cleveland Plain Dealer** and the **Philadelphia Inquirer**. He is the media critic for **The Occidental Observer** ([www.theoccidentalobserver.com](http://www.theoccidentalobserver.com)) and doesn't doubt his whiteness for a second.*