SPIKE LEE

Charlie Rose Interview Start 31:09
Hegemony

is a concept that has been used to describe and explain the dominance of one social group over another, such that the ruling group or hegemon acquires some degree of consent from the subordinate, as opposed to dominance purely by force.
FORM SEEN IN HOLLYWOOD

- invisibility of the dominant group
- a white male filmmaker is just a filmmaker while others who are not part of that dominant culture are categorized according to that group
INVISIBLE IDENTITY

- How does that play into hegemony?
- Does invisibility of dominant culture create a power differential?
Laura Mulvey wrote *Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema*

Hollywood power structure based on male gaze and the passive female object

Hooks points out that Mulvey is calling white women “all women”

Black women have a critical viewpoint when looking at films
after making his first feature (1986) Spike Lee stated the importance of African Americans making films about African Americans

Why do you think that this would be important to him?
STEREOTYPES

- Is it more likely that a white male director will stereotype an African American Male?

- How do stereotypes play into Hollywood storytelling?
SPIKE LEE, DO THE RIGHT THING
1989

- Exceed Lee’s earlier efforts thematically and artistically
- energy and craftsmanship
- realistic portrayal of African American neighborhood in Brooklyn
- Mise en Scène, music, and dialogue rich with allusions to African American culture
interviewers asked Spike Lee where the drugs were in his film.

Spike Lee called that a racist question.

riots?
SPIKE LEE

- controversial
- portrayed poorly in the press
- Do the Right Thing was rumored as a threat in movie theaters even before it was released.
- pioneer filmmaker (Charles Burnett and Gordon Parks are the only African American Filmmakers that precede him--many followed)
- Mass Communications Major, Morehouse College
- Studied Film at New York University (Tish School of the Arts) Scorsese, Seidelman, Jarmusch
- She’s Gotta Have It, 1986 (Critical Success as well)
- *Inside Man* and *When the Levees Broke* are his two
DO THE RIGHT THING

- First Union Film
- Diverse cast and crew
“Remember what Kim Basinger did? Onstage she said, The best film of the year is not even nominated, and it’s Do the Right Thing. I didn’t even know her. But when Driving Miss Mother****** Daisy won Best Picture, that hurt. No one’s talking about Driving Miss Daisy now.

Part of American Film Institute’s top 100 films in 100 years
DIVERGENT APPROACH TO STORYTELLING

- encourages critical thought
- open ended problems
- encourages viewers to develop their own solutions
- conversation goes on after the film is over
Danny Aiello didn’t believe that his character Sal was racist, but Spike Lee did.
MALCOM X AND MARTIN LUTHER KING

DIVERGENT IDEAS REGARDING VIOLENCE AS A MEANS OF ACHIEVING SOCIAL JUSTICE (ENDS THE FILM)
DIVERGENT EMOTIONS

VIOLENCE AND COMMUNITY
IMPORTANCE OF PROPERTY

- Back to Fredrick Jameson
- What does property mean in this film?
- **WHO** does the neighborhood belong to?
- Human life vs. property
- a litmus test of ethics
- To discuss after class