

THE MESSAGE AND THE MOVIES

CINEMA AS IDEOLOGY

Week 10: What is Woke?

The Hijacking of 'Woke'

- Most may have first heard the term 'woke' at the inception of the Black Lives Matter movement after the shooting by Missouri police of Michael Brown

'On the right, "woke" — like its cousin "canceled" — bespeaks "political correctness" gone awry, and the term itself is usually used sarcastically. At the Republican National Convention in August, right-wing Rep. Matt Gaetz (R-FL) scolded "waketopians," grouping them together with socialists and Biden supporters, as though the definition of a "waketopian" was self-evident.'

A History of Wokeness
Aja Romano – Vox

The History of 'Woke'

- "The earliest known examples of wokeness as a concept revolve around the idea of Black consciousness "waking up" to a new reality or activist framework and dates back to the early 20th century." Vox
- 1923 - "Wake up Ethiopians...Wake up Africans"— Marcus Garvey – a call to global black citizens to become more politically and social aware
- "Stay woke" was the spoken afterword to 1938 Lead Belly song 'Scottsboro Boys'
- William Melvin Kelley wrote a first-person piece for the Times called "If You're Woke You Dig It"

Reasons for Woke.

Economic Discrepancy

"The data presented here shows us that neither marriage, a college education nor a lifetime of work provides the answer for equalizing opportunity between black and white women. Black and white women are positioned differently from one another largely because white women benefit more from wealth being passed down from their families. Intergenerational transfers like financing a college education, providing help with the down payment on a house and other gifts to seed asset accumulation are central sources of wealth building. Given past and present barriers that have kept black families from building wealth, private action and market forces alone cannot be expected to address wide-scale racial wealth inequality that is gendered."

Women, Race and Wealth Report (2017)

Authors: Khaing Zaw, Jhumpa Bhattacharya, Anne Price, Darrick Hamilton, and William Darity, Jr.

Get Out (2017)

Jordan Peele

- A young African-American man uncovers a disturbing secret when he meets the family of his white girlfriend, Rose
- Subverts the white character as the 'saviour' trope
- Depicts the lack of attention given to missing black Americans in comparison to missing white females

....depressingly plausible ... Although black people only comprise 13 percent of America's population, they are 34 percent of America's missing, a reality that exists as the result of a mélange of racial and socioeconomic factors rendering black lives demonstratively less valuable than the lives [of] our white counterparts."

Damon Young

"The thing Get Out does so well – and the thing that will rankle with some viewers – is to show how, however unintentionally, these same people can make life so hard and uncomfortable for black people. It exposes a liberal ignorance and hubris that has been allowed to fester. It's an attitude, an arrogance which in the film leads to a horrific final solution, but in reality, leads to a complacency that is just as dangerous."

Larne Bakare

It's all too Woke!

The perception that Hollywood films are 'too woke' does not paint the real picture in terms of actual change in attitudes or representation

Example - Marvel Films

Phase 1.

- Focused on five white men with one white woman
- Phase 2.
- Featured five movies starring five white men but added two black characters in smaller roles
- Phase 3.
- After 10 years finally introduced a leading black character but then added 2 more white main characters

21st Century Representation

- But even though Black Americans are receiving more proportional on-screen representation most non-white males continue to be under represented
- According to UCLA between 2020 and 2021 only around 25% of leads in scripted TV shows were given to non-white actors
- Roles for gang members and thugs disproportionately go to black actors

Thank you for booking and attending this course. Just a reminder that my next 10 week Tuesday evening course will start in October and will be as follows:

Satanic Panic! The Devil on the Silver Screen (90m) New Course

Since cinema was invented, filmmakers have sought to highlight and exploit our fascination with black magic, possession and the very Devil himself. To usher in the witching season, this course, using plenty of clips and discussion, will conjure out of the shadows many known and not so well-known cinematic delights perpetuated with Satanism and a Hellish sense of the occult. As well as examining cinema itself we will also scrutinise the controversies behind many of these features and how cinema became embroiled in the satanic panic scare of the 70s and 80s and how it also got caught in the crossfire of the PMRC's attack on heavy metal music and devil worship. We will look at a whole host of films from the silent days onwards and make detailed studies of movies such as *The Devil Rides Out*, *The Exorcist*, *The Omen*, *A Field in England*, *Late Night with the Devil*, *Brimstone and Treacle*, *Wall Street*, *Naked* and many, many more. Expect midnight ceremonies and sacrificial rites as we stare into the eternal flickering abyss.

If you would like a list of films I will be covering on this course please email me at andrew.graves@rocketmail.com