

Opinion

Black History Month Movies Present "Food for Thought"

By Linda McKnight

Movies are most commonly looked upon as an inexpensive form of good entertainment. Sometimes filmmakers seek to educate rather than entertain using past and or present events and social issues and concerns.

Three movies recently shown during the university's celebration of Black History Month fit into this category. The movies "Do The Right Thing," "Mississippi Burning," and "Lean On Me" all presented important societal issues worth taking into consideration; however all attempts at educating the public through action and drama on screen are not successful. Sometimes the point is misconstrued and the main idea gets lost in the misleading details. Thus, there is a question as to just how well filmmakers focus on realism in their attempt to put real life on the screen.

"Do The Right Thing," written and produced by young, aspiring filmmaker Spike Lee, is with no doubt a film that has the intentions of emphasizing the ever-existent problem of racism in America but may have missed the boat in doing so. In summary, the film focuses on a white owned business in a black neighborhood that is felt to promote racial tension. The owner is looked down upon for allowing one of his Italian workers to scold Smiley a stuttering "weirdo" of the neighborhood who constantly tries to hawk picture of a Martin Luther King and Malcolm X shaking hands; his intolerance of loud rap music from a "boom box" that is constantly brought into his business by

a young black male known to the neighborhood as Radio Raheem who protests against turning down the volume; and the fact that he does not have any pictures of famous Black leaders on wall in his business known as the "Wall of Fame" which greatly upsets a black "political type" of the neighborhood known as Buggin' Out. As the movie progresses, tempers flare over differences in opinion. As an end result, Radio Raheem, who refused to give up the right to promote his loud music, is killed in a riot by the police, Buggin' Out is jailed, and Smiley achieves the satisfaction of putting at least one of his pictures to good use as he hangs it on the now burning businesses "Wall of Fame." Those characters felt that since the white owned business was in a Black neighborhood that the owner should have been accepting of the total attitudes, habits, and ways of life of the people surrounding his business. This idea of acceptance or "going along with" presents a question as to whether or not Spike Lee's point-of-view on racism was effectively carried out.

One might argue on the terms that the characters did not have the right to force their opinions concerning the uniqueness of themselves and their people on the owner of the business and thus declare racism on his part for his right, desire, and need to run his business his way. The characters may be cited by some as overreacting to the circumstances.

In contrast, two other movies shown during the month made very good points concerning the need to be aware of what's happened in the past and how to improve the present and futures of young teens lives.

For instance, in the movie "Mississippi Burning," the murder of three civil rights workers is carefully depicted as an illustration against the Civil Rights Movement in Philadelphia, Mississippi during the summer of 1964. On June 21st, after the three had visited the ruins of the Mt. Zion African Methodist Episcopal church near Philadelphia, civil rights workers James Chaney, 21, a black Mississippian, and white New Yorkers, Mickey Schwerner, 24, and Andy Goodman, 20, were jailed on a false speeding charge and then released only to be ambushed by the Klan. It was a set-up. After 44 days of searching, they were found buried in an earthen dam and their murderers still unknown. Those persons involved were later discovered, tried, and convicted. Therefore, a movie such as this one that illustrates the burning of churches, homes, and other property that belonged to blacks along with unjustly killing them clearly demonstrates as well as educates and individual on how racism prevailed in the past.

"Lean On Me" is another movie which clearly and distinctly educates society on how young minority children, especially blacks, must be soundly guided in the need and purpose of obtaining a good education and taking it seriously in the process. The basic message to students reiterated taking an interest in learning while to educators it stressed the need to care.

Thus, all movies meant to educate do not. In any case, it is best to watch with a discerning eye and be aware of the loopholes that may exist.

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say, "There is nothing to do on this campus, and, Why can't we have more parties on campus?" Think about this what are you, the students doing to help? We as a student body need to stop talking about what we would like done on campus and actually do something about it. Thanks for your support!

"Channel 1":

Why the controversy?

By Joanie Tuttle
Editor-in-Chief

Recently, there's been a lot of controversy concerning putting "Channel 1" in the N. C. public schools. At the center of the controversy is the question of whether the 12-minute news program, two minutes of which contain commercials will harm or exploit the students watching it. Many of those who oppose "Channel 1" must not know that Whittle Communications, it's parent company refuses to accept certain types of ads. This is just one of the reasons why I feel "Channel 1" is impressive. The following is the list of specific advertising that will not be shown on "Channel 1": Abortion Clinics, Alcoholic Beverages, Firearms, Ammunition and Fireworks, Gambling, "Head Shops" or other establishments whose activity concentrates on Drug-related paraphernalia, Lotteries, Motion Pictures rated "X" or "R" by the MPAA, Prescription Drugs, Feminine Hygiene Products, Political advertisements, Religious Time, Solicitation of Funds, and Tobacco Products. Television, needless to say doesn't have the same policy as "Channel 1". The next time you view a program on television

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