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*Do the Right Thing* Film Review

In the film, *Do the Right Thing*, director Spike Lee portrays the negative connotations of African Americans during the time period through racial conflicts. Throughout the film Lee consistently counters hatred and acts of violence with love and doing the right thing. Lee utilizes quotes from both Martin Luther King Jr. and Malcolm X at the end in order to depict the differences between the ethnic backgrounds in the community.

Throughout the film Lee utilizes certain characters in order to illustrate the love and hatred between all ethnic backgrounds. First and foremost protagonist Mookie represents both a voice of reason and also those who utilize violence. Mookie can be viewed as a voice of reason because although he lacks ambition to become someone greater, he works to support his girlfriend Trina and son Hector. However, he is the first to initiate the demolition of Sal's Famous Pizzeria by throwing a trashcan through the window. This illumines the image this society has painted of a typical African American- someone who is up to no good and only raises havoc in the community. Furthermore, there is Radio Raheem, killed by a police officer during one of the final scenes, who consistently wears rings labeled "love" and "hate" to symbolize the struggle between the two forces. He constantly plays the song "Fight the Power" emphasizing the idea of rising against those with power. One of my personal favorites is Da Mayor. Although Da

Mayor is constantly drunk he only speaks the “double truth, ruth” and his intentions are always good (Lee 1989). For example, he pushes a boy out of the street almost getting hit by a car. He also purchases roses for Mother Sister with the intention of winning her heart over instead of sleeping with her. Ultimately, all characters of this production lead to the grand finale where Mister Señor Love Daddy states “my people, my people, what can I say; say what I can. I saw it but didn’t believe it; I didn’t believe what I saw. Are we gonna live together? Together are we gonna live” (Lee 1989). This ending embodies the love and hate between both races and lets the audience decide for themselves whether they are going to live in this world of self destruction simply because the color of their skin.

I really enjoyed watching this film because Spike Lee does not take a specific side and reveals all perspectives. Also I loved the ending because of what Señor Love Daddy states and the director quotes both Martin Luther King Jr. and Malcolm X. I personally agree with Martin Luther King Jr. more, but Malcolm X is not wrong in stating self-defense as violence. My favorite character is Da Mayor because he is drunk during the whole film, but people are usually brutally honest when influence with alcohol; he is someone to look up to because while everyone is so focused on hatred and violence towards a different color, he is the one full of love no matter what. Also I became really upset when the police did not let go of Radio Raheem until he suffocated to death and they had the audacity to just throw him in the trunk and drive off. I would think people with authority would do the “right thing,” but everything is so corrupted they do not even do the right thing. Despite everything going down the drain there is hope that there is still

humanity within the community and we can see that through characters such as Jade, Señor Love Daddy, and Da Mayor.

This film furthered my knowledge in viewing African American history in a new light. Hatred was not just held against blacks, it was held against everyone. Humanity was so caught up with others being lesser beings than themselves that they did not realize they could have benefited each other. This film opened my eyes to the perspective of the white community. Although there were characters that were against black communities such as Pino, there were those who called those communities their home and they were there to stay like Sal. People like Sal have a big heart and yes they cracked at times because of stress, but he always had hope. There were many that worked towards the love instead of the hate. It had to start somewhere and the director started with this film.

#### Works Cited

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