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A Response to Spike Lee’s *School Daze*

Spike Lee’s 80s comedy *School Daze* was a film that took me by surprise in more ways than one. It was certainly more lighter in tone than the director’s work I am more familiar with, specifically that of the racial commentary of *Do the Right Thing*. I did not expect it to be a musical for one, as the scene where Dap and Julian’s girlfriends have the barber shop feud song kind of took me off-guard. It was also jarring to see how over-the-top Julian was as an antagonist. Although I am unfamiliar with the concocting villainy that is college fraternities, it was admittingly strange to see Julian take such an almost cartoonishly malicious stake within the story, especially because of his actor being Giancarlo Esposito who is famous for playing more reserved antagonists. Most of all, it was a complete turn when the film reached its climax, as the upbeat attitude of the film was completely absence with Julian forcing his girlfriend to have sex with Spike Lee’s character half-pint. It was beyond disturbing, and was in a strange way echoing the wave of tension that Lee had employed for *Do the Right Thing*. As jarring as *School Daze* can be, it is a delightful film completely representative of African American culture while delivering an enriching, complex story of college life.

Works Cited

Lee, Spike, director. *School Daze*. *YouTube Movies*, Columbia Pictures, 1988, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k91sZ\_VqqsM.