

## Hollywood Comparison

### Auteur:

A filmmaker's distinctive style or trademark across a body of films. Hitchcock is an example of an auteur working with a studio system.

An auteur may not necessarily be a director – e.g. an editor or cinematographer can also be an auteur.

### Hollywood after the studio era: Key Points:

- In 1948 the Supreme Court ruled that the major studios are operating as a monopoly, not allowing for fair competition. The period after the studio era ushers in opportunities for more independent producers.
- 1967 onwards – known as a cinema of auteurs – directors with more creative freedom who are influenced by European New Waves. A more experimental cinema.
- Fragmented and declining cinema audiences during the 1950s onwards – Studios target films towards specific demographics – e.g. the youth audience.
- 1968 – The Production Code is replaced with the ratings system. Allows filmmakers to make films with violence and sex suitable for adult audiences only.

### Vertigo and Do The Right Thing:

Comparison	Vertigo (Hitchcock, 1958)	Do The Right Thing (Lee, 1989)
Film form and aesthetics	 <p>Use of circular imagery in camerawork and mise-en-scene. Costume is used symbolically - Judy's grey suit conveys her icy and mysterious demeanour. Green is used to convey the ghostly imagery of Madeleine. Bernard Herrman's score reflects circular, twisted motifs and Scottie's obsession with Madeline.</p>	 <p>Use of vivid warm reds, yellows and oranges to convey the heatwave, rising tensions and 'Afrocentric' aesthetic. Costume used to convey characters' identities. Experimental cinematography - use of canted angles and high and low angles. Public Enemy's <i>Fight the Power</i> reflects the politics of the film –critical of white Hollywood.</p>
Representations	 <p>Madeleine/Judy is subject to Scottie's gaze. However, Judy is not simply passive as she knowingly entraps Scottie into believing she is Madeleine. The lack of ethnic minority characters reflects white-dominated Hollywood of the era.</p>	 <p>Each character represents a segment of society in multicultural Brooklyn. Lee has been criticised for creating stereotypical representations of Italian-Americans. The hall of fame in Sal's pizzeria is a comment on the lack of prominence of black actors in Hollywood.</p>
Institutional contexts	 <p>Hitchcock worked at Paramount from 1954-1960. This was his mature period and creative peak. Hitchcock was given creative freedom, directing and producing 5 films at Paramount.</p>	 <p>Spike Lee was originally going to produce the film for Paramount. However, the studio insisted he change the ending, worrying that it might incite moviegoers to riot. Lee refused and instead produced the film for Universal on a lower budget. Shot on location in Stuyvesant Avenue, Brooklyn.</p>
Cultural contexts	 <p>Although directed by an auteur director, Vertigo is also an example of classical Hollywood filmmaking. It combines Hitchcock's technical flourishes, such as the dolly zoom shot, with the conventions of classical filmmaking.</p>	 <p>An example of New Black Cinema of the late 1980s/early 1990s. Filmmakers such as Spike Lee and John Singleton came into prominence making films from a black perspective and featuring soundtracks by black artists, challenging white hegemony.</p>
Social, political and historical contexts	 <p>The film can be read as as reflection post-war American anxieties with men trying to assert control over women as Scottie attempts to control Madeleine/Judy.</p>	 <p>The film makes references throughout to racially motivated incidents and real people, including the Howard Beach incident and Mayor Koch. Lee comments on racially motivated police beatings and killing of young black men.</p>
Auteur	 <p>Vertigo is considered to be Hitchcock's masterpiece and most personal film. It contains Hitchcockian themes of voyeurism, obsession – especially of blonde women, duality and guilt.</p>	 <p>The film reflects Lee's racial politics and own background. Lee grew up in Brooklyn and often criticises gentrification of neighbourhoods in this area. He often introduces characters visually and characters often break the fourth wall. His films have a vibrant energy and characters often talk in a stylised, rhythmic way.</p>