



Reel Inequality

Hollywood Actors and Racism

by Nancy Wang Yuen

DESCRIPTION

When the 2016 Oscar acting nominations all went to whites for the second consecutive year, #OscarsSoWhite became a trending topic. Yet these enduring racial biases afflict not only the Academy Awards, but also Hollywood as a whole. Why do actors of color, despite exhibiting talent and bankability, continue to lag behind white actors in presence and prominence?

Reel Inequality examines the structural barriers minority actors face in Hollywood, while shedding light on how they survive in a racist industry. The book charts how white male gatekeepers dominate Hollywood, breeding a culture of ethnocentric storytelling and casting. Nancy Wang Yuen interviewed nearly a hundred working actors and drew on published interviews with celebrities, such as Viola Davis, Chris Rock, Gina Rodriguez, Oscar Isaac, Lucy Liu, and Ken Jeong, to explore how racial stereotypes categorize and constrain actors. Their stories reveal the day-to-day racism actors of color experience in talent agents' offices, at auditions, and on sets. Yuen also exposes sexist hiring and programming practices, highlighting the structural inequalities that actors of color, particularly women, continue to face in Hollywood.

This book not only conveys the harsh realities of racial inequality in Hollywood, but also provides vital insights from actors who have succeeded on their own terms, whether by sidestepping the system or subverting it from within. Considering how their struggles impact real-world attitudes about race and diversity, *Reel Inequality* follows actors of color as they suffer, strive, and thrive in Hollywood.

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