

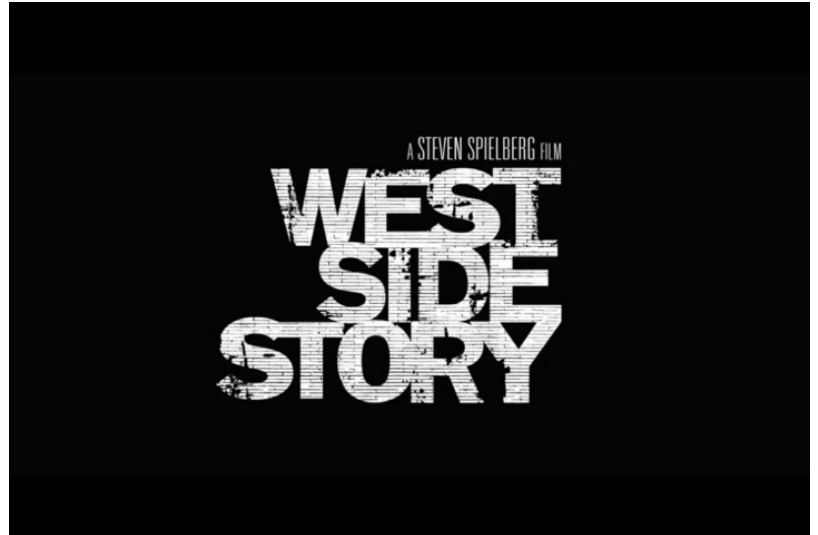


Written by [Selwyn Duke](#) on December 16, 2021

## Spielberg's Politically Correct "West Side Story" Flops With Audiences

Call it Woke Side Story. Because there's woke, really woke, *über* woke, and then there's this: not including subtitles for a movie's Spanish dialogue because you don't want to give "English the power over the Spanish."

That's exactly what director Steven Spielberg did, and why, in his recently released *West Side Story* (WSS), a "remake" of the iconic 1961 film of the same name. Spielberg says, however, that it's not a remake but a "reimagining." But no matter one's imagination, it's hard to conceive of the flick's debut this past weekend as anything but a flop — and expensive one, too.



YouTube

As Variety [reported](#) Monday:

Over the weekend, Disney and 20th Century Studio's reimagining of "West Side Story" collected just \$10.5 million in its domestic debut, a dismal result for a movie of its scale and scope. The lavish musical, one of the best reviewed movies of the year, carries a \$100 million budget and faces an uphill battle to profitability. Given its price tag, industry insiders estimate "West Side Story" needs to generate at least \$300 million globally to break even in its theatrical run. The film is playing exclusively on the big screen and doesn't have a hybrid streaming component, which could help ticket sales in the long run ... but it has an awful lot of ground to make up.

Variety and other left-wing media provide their reasons (excuses?) for why WSS stumbled, such as how it's Christmas season, that adult-demo movies don't do as well opening weekend, and COVID-19 (of course!). They also make an argument for why the flick could hit pay dirt in the future. But they don't mention what could be the 600-pound gorilla in the middle of the theater: The film is apparently a woke joke.

For example, Breitbart [reported](#) last week that while speaking "with IGN's Simon Cardy, Spielberg said that no subtitles will be presented over the Spanish dialogue 'out of respect for the inclusivity of our intentions to hire a totally Latinx cast to play the Sharks' boys and girls.'"

"If I subtitled the Spanish I'd simply be doubling down on the English and giving English the power over the Spanish," Spielberg explained. "This was not going to happen in this film; I needed to respect the language enough not to subtitle it."

By the way, would anyone sincere about wanting "to respect the language" use the term "Latinx," which [only two percent of Hispanics](#) embrace and almost half find offensive? Do you respect Spanish, a



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*gendered* language, by degendering it?

What's more, do you respect your own country by ignoring what is the *de facto* language of the land?

Then there's this: If Spielberg "thinks that translating Spanish to English is a bit 'colonial,'" [writes](#) a YouTube commenter, "then he should remind himself how the Spanish language arrived to South America in the first place." Ouch!

And a fellow YouTube commenter [adds](#), "Spielberg got it backwards. By not having subtitles, you are actually signaling that what the Spanish speakers are saying is so unimportant that the audience doesn't need to understand it."

But the political correctness goes beyond subtitles' absence, as NBC [explained](#) last Friday:

In the new movie, Spielberg and screenwriter Tony Kushner work to correct the original musical and movie's stereotypical depictions, adding more specificity and historical context around the Puerto Rican experience, and around the issues of racism and racial hostility.

Such animosity first becomes evident when the Jets vandalize a mural of the Puerto Rican flag with a quotation from Pedro Albizu Campos, the leading figure of the Puerto Rican independence movement. The quote reads, "la patria es valor y sacrificio," Spanish for "the homeland is value and sacrifice."

"Once you see that and you notice that the flag is the light blue flag, which is the original color of the Puerto Rican flag" before the U.S. colonized Puerto Rico in 1898 after the Spanish-American War..., Virginia Sánchez-Korrol, a professor emerita of Puerto Rican and Latino studies at Brooklyn College who was a historical consultant for the film, said.

Commentator Andrea Widburg [points out](#) that the aforementioned Kushner is a "hard-left playwright who worked with Spielberg on *Munich*, a pro-Palestinian movie." Of course, it's hard finding Hollywood figures who aren't hard-left. But given his passions, it's unsurprising that prior "to making the film," Spielberg and Kushner "met with students and faculty at the University of Puerto Rico to hear their perspectives on how the film should treat the difficult subject matter about a Puerto Rican gang facing off against a white American gang on the streets of New York," Breitbart also informs.

This raises a question. The idea here is that only people whose ethnicity, race, culture, etc. are congruent with a situation can understand that situation. So why talk to academia-ensconced (and perhaps wealthy) Puerto Ricans living 1,600 miles away in Puerto Rico if you want to learn about the realities for poor Puerto Ricans living in NYC?

Breitbart also quotes Spielberg as saying that his WSS additionally "speaks a lot to what's happening today in terms of what's happening at the borders. It's very relevant today to essentially the rejection of anyone who isn't white. And that's a big part of our story."

So the film speaks to how we're subject to a federal-government-facilitated invasion via our southern border, often involving dangerous, unknown quantities who may proceed to commit heinous crimes in our country? Good to know.

As for "the rejection of anyone who isn't white," perhaps your perspective is a tad different when you're an old, Tinseltown-bubble white man worth \$3.7 billion. Maybe then you don't notice that it's only white males (and now sometimes Asians) who are excluded from affirmative-action benefits. Maybe you don't



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know that whites are the ones accused of having “privilege” even when dirt poor. Maybe you haven’t heard about the Critical Race Theory dogma that all white people are oppressors and of the effort to erase “whiteness” (a euphemism for white people). *Maybe*. But more likely is that Spielberg is using a woke spiel to get what his money alone can’t buy: acceptance in his pseudo-elite circles — and a dispensation for being the wrong skin color.

As for WSS’s poor opening weekend, Breitbart’s John Nolte [says](#) the problem is that Spielberg’s “remake is more homework than entertaining,” is “insulting about ‘correcting’ a classic,” and tells “non-Spanish speakers they [aren’t] welcome by excluding subtitles.” Widburg simply states that “Hollywood misread America.”

For the left-wing media’s part, maybe its hope that WSS will gain steam post-Christmas and beyond is not in vain. So we can’t know for sure that it will continue to flop — only that it deserves to.



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