Literature Review #2

Hidden Figures

Name

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Date

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*Hidden Figures* (2017) is the movie which sheds light on femininity, race relations, class, and ethnicity. The movie is based on the life of the African American mathematicians, who were part of NASA, during the era of the space race in the 1960s. The movie has specifically depicted the struggles of the African American women who were talented and remarkable enough to become a part of NASA, however, had to struggle to get their accomplishments acknowledged. They were able to play the key role in the success of the missions of NASA, while not being acknowledged and mentioned for their services. Femininity, race, ethnicity and class difference were the major components of the society at that time when people had to struggle to get their due recognition and rights due to these factors of their identity. The movie may have been the source of shedding light on the struggle of the African American women to get equal rights and recognition in the work setting while highlighting the fact hard work and talent can never be ignored.

The film depicts the struggle of human-computer and mathematician of NASA named Katherine Goble, an aspiring engineer of NASA named Mary Jackson and an unofficial supervisor Dorothy Vaughan. All three women are extremely talented and hardworking and play a crucial role in the success of the space mission of NASA. They have to face the discrimination of their colleagues in the work setting, where they are not given the credit of their achievements. Katherine resolves the mathematical problem which was a major hurdle in the success of the mission of NASA and composes a report about it, however, she is forced to remove her name from it. On the other hand, Mary identifies a flaw in the machinery and resolves the issue. She is encouraged to apply for the position of engineer by her supervisor, however, she is rejected due to her lack of education. When she tries to get enrolled in the required course, she is not given admission due to the segregation laws of separate classes of white and colored people. The third character Dorothy has to face the stigmatization at the workplace because she is unable to become an active supervisor of an all-white team because she is a lady of color. However, all three women do not submit to the discrimination, stigmatization, and injustice of the workplace and society and continue to contribute their services to the mission. The three main characters of the movie are responsible for contributing to the space run mission of NASA. The characters are not related to each other by blood, however, they feel the connection because they belong to the African American minority group of the society. The in charge in the movie is the white people of the society, working for NASA, as they hold the important positions and become the source of limiting the success of the three African American women (Melfi, & Schroeder, 2017).

Hidden figures film has actually shed light on the hidden struggle and contribution of the African American women in the space mission of NASA. They were stigmatized that women cannot solve the mathematical problems or become the engineers and supervisors and achieving those targets for the ladies of color was even more difficult for the ladies of color. The movie also depicted that the black women were not allowed to use the same washroom as the white women and Katherine had to travel for almost forty-five minutes to use the washroom of colored people while taking a long break from her work. The movie perfectly depicts the ideas and concepts described in the readings in the way that it shed light on the concept of gender inequality in the workplace. The movie has depicted that although the three African American women were part of one of the most reputed organizations of the United States of America, they were not given equal rights and opportunities for progress. When they tried to show their potential and their willingness to climbing the ladders of progress, they were held back by their supervisors, their colleagues and the discriminative segregation laws of the society. They did not lack in their ability, or competence; however, just because they were women and that too of color, they were not allowed to enjoy the same rights and get the recognition like the other employees of the organization who were white people, which is the example of glass ceiling in the workplace (Ali, 2015).

The film has also depicted the struggle of women in society, as they are stigmatized due to being women. Lorber, (1993) and Crawford, (2004) has shared in their readings that the discrimination of men and women is biological in nature, however, the society has taken this too seriously making it a basis of discriminating the women against the men. The society has attached the stigma of weakness and feebleness with women, in order to keep them behind the men, who are acknowledged as strong and powerful. The society has just attached the stigma with the gender differences that men are more capable, intelligent and competitive as compared to the women and the movie has challenged this notion. It has shown that women are held back due to such stigmatization, however, by performing better than their male colleagues, the women proved that they are not less than men in their knowledge, competence, and intelligence.

The movie has presented the ideas of the strength, capability, and intelligence of the women and specifically the women of color. It has shown that women cannot be stopped from making progress, just because of their different physical appearance and gender. The movie has also presented the message that the difference in gender, sexuality, race, and class cannot be used as the means of limiting the progress of any section of society. The human being has been created equal and their apparent differences do not provide any support of that claim of superiority of men and the inferiority of the women (Sapolsky, 2007). Moreover, the dark skin color of the African American community does not provide any support or evidence of their inferiority to the white population of the society. The progress of the three African American women and their recognition by the government of the United States of America is the proof of their intelligence, competence, as well as the equality of genders and different races (Powlishta et al., 2001).

The film hidden figures has shed light on the struggles of three African American women who were part of the space run mission of NASA. They were stigmatized due to being women and belonging to the Africa American race, however, they faced all the difficulties persistently while working hard and finally proving their worth, competence and intelligence by ensuring the success of the mission. The movie has depicted that the society tries to keep the woman from achieving success, by stigmatizing their gender differences, however, that cannot confine the women from depicting their potential and making progress anymore. Moreover, the differences in race, class, and ethnicity also cannot limit the people from making progress. These were just the tactics of the powerful groups of the society to keep the authority in their hands, however, in the present time, these cannot be used to limit the success and accomplishments of the general public, irrespective of their race, ethnicity, class, and gender.

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