Driving Miss Daisy

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Driving Miss Daisy

**Movie Plot:**

The film “Driving Miss Daisy” by Alfred Uhry is a 1989’s screenplay based on the story of a Southern Jewish elite widow Miss Daisy and her black chauffeur Hoke. The movie takes place between the periods of 1948 to 1973. The play represents the significant social changes that took place at that time by making friendships with opposite races. This play shows is funny and sentimental at the same time. Director Bruce Beresford has done justice with the play setting and its cast (“Driving Miss Daisy Introduction,” n.d.).

Miss Daisy lost control of the car while taking it out of her Atlantic driveway and crossing all barriers of a holding wall into the neighbor’s yard. This happened because she was pressing gas instead of putting her foot on the brakes. Yet Boolie, her son, didn’t accuse his mother. As she is 70 and has all her physical and mental abilities yet at this age car does misbehave when she is driving it. Even though Daisy objected but Boolie had to find her a driver and he was lucky to find Hoke Colburn who was a black man in his 60’s, widower a tactful person with keen understanding. This play was screened in John Houseman Theater due to its great style and it’s the most successful stage-to-screen translation. The writer of the screenplay Mr. Uhry selected the three characters for the play with great care because they are only talked about on stage and that these characters do not have a negative effect over a central relationship that gives strength to the play. As this play is free of structure to start with this made Mr. Uhry’s job easier than most playwrights face during stage-to-screen transformation. Within a single all-purpose set that comes to represent it uses fewer props such as Miss Daisy house and the surrounding locations and Atlantic vicinity. To some extent, this play was established already. Certain thrilling dramatic delicacy is lost when the above settings are made obvious in a film. But Mr. Uhry and Mr. Beresford did well to conserve the vital spirit of “Driving Miss Daisy”. It is a small and positively skeptical film which tells about time from the prestigious position, social alterations taking place in the south between 1948 and 1973 and consist of a 25-year friendship that occurs with these changes.

On one side there is Miss Daisy who is a rich Jew widow and who is not very fond of servants and hates to be considered or called rich. And who is always complaining about her being cared for and not having privacy to his son Boolie. On the other hand, there is Hoke who has quite an understanding of the real world and is not surprised by the changes that occur with life. According to Hoke, Miss Daisy is holding on to what she learned during her time as a school teacher .besides other things she taught him how to read and in return, he teaches her about the world and giving her the understanding of life. In the beginning, it was hard to deal with her as she would find fault in everything but with time, Hoke learned how to handle her and agrees with her for time and then simply teaches her to give her understanding of things she was complaining about. Because of being outsiders as one is Jew and the other is black Mr. Uhry does not push too hard but still it is a fact that this alliance between two outsiders at that point is being the friendship of equals. Miss Tandy during her roles on stage in her long film carrier never had the role of humor and richness to match this role of Miss Daisy. But she played this role with perfection, hilariously mad but always self-aware in times creates an idea of a particular woman. Miss Daisy is particularly very stubborn which is hard to break even though underneath very fragile .on the other hand Mr. Freeman who is an actor from stage working in the movie with sort of hilarious changes that is achieved and learned by actors after a very work and failures. This performance of Mr. Freeman graceful and tough. The two actors performed to be very dramatic without losing the real frame of the film. Daisy and Hoke had so many dents in this relationship and it was very late until she realized Hoke’s dignity and honesty. There were even moments of rare intimacy and they shared the deepest secrets. During their sharing of stories and the way of getting along Daisy knows she had the contention of prejudice and how she had been treating Hoke until now. Uhry has built up the storyline with the right pace and improving their friendship through the course of several incidents daily.

**Characters**

**Miss Daisy**

The character of Miss Daisy is played by Dan Aykroyd. Daisy Werthan is an elite traditional Southern Jewish widow aged 72 years at the beginning of the film. She was just born after the end of civil war and had seen the failed system of reconstruction and inequality of blacks for the basic facilities and protection under the law. She had seen the oppression experienced by African Americans. She has seen all the transition phase in her life of 96 years. Maybe this is the reason she is still attached to her old ways while the world changes around her. Though she had the notion of her being a liberal and progressive human being but faced challenges while adapting to the ideas of assimilation and desegregation. She realizes she is not capable of doing things as she used to but she cannot accept it due to her pride and stubborn nature. Even while keeping a maid at home, she doesn't like to get dependent on her. She likes to take control of anything she can in her life. She grew up as a poor girl and only got money after getting married to a rich man. She did a job as a teacher to meet her own needs. So she does not like people working for her, rather at heart, she wants to do her work. She still remembers the values taught in her household and practices them. She is orderly and obsessive about how certain things must be done. Though she did not want the chauffeur Hoke with her and degraded him at any point she got, but at the cemetery, she showed her respect for him and realized he is a smart persona with no educational opportunities. So she teaches him how to read a name by using phonetics. She believes she doesn’t have a bone of prejudice and sees herself as a liberal person. She does not realize how her attitude depicts difference among her liberal self-image and actual behavior towards blacks. She listens to Martin Luther King and realizes that she is one of those oppressors too by remaining silent. Later she does realize how it feels to be at the receiving end of the unjust and violent behavior. And gets along with Hoke and calls him her best friend.

**Hoke**

Hoke is played by Morgan Freeman, Hollywood’s exemplary magical Negro. At the start, if the film, he is a 60 years old widower. He's quiet, string and illiterate until Daisy teaches him to read. He was deprived of his basic rights while living in a segregated Georgia and did not have enough education. But he is a hardworking man who works to make a living for his daughter and granddaughter. He works as a driver and handy around the house too. He is a very patient and forgiving man and always treats Daisy well even though her behavior is often dismissive and demeaning. He realizes the way to handle her is to agree with whatever she says and then winning her over. Though he did not get enough respect from her he never lost his self-respect. Being black he has been listening to people all his life but he still had his pride and own terms. Through his compromising yet respectful behavior, he makes Daisy realize her intolerance. He remains with her till the end and earns her trust.

**Theme**

The basic themes described in the storyline are prejudice, friendship, old age, society and class, and race. All these topics have been highlighted on different occasions within the film. Daisy had her prejudice but kept telling herself that she didn't. She never stopped being judgmental until she understood what was wrong with her. Then she developed a friendship with a black old man at the end after going through a series of bad incidents. Old age may be a very critical thing and people once again wish to have that control over their own and other's lives like they used to have. The different classes within a society deprive the less privileged of their rights and opportunities to go forward. And the race is an embedded issue in our culture that can only be removed by looking around and seeing people for who they are (Comeau, Grissett, & MacLennan, 2016).

**Opinion**

In my opinion, this movie is a beautiful depiction of cultural differences and how these notions of racial inferiority can be removed by getting to know the person. I liked this movie and found it very moving. The best thing I liked about it is the transition phase where Daisy from being an arrogant racist woman turn into a sensitive understanding person. Those small scenes where she gives him a book to learn but tells him it is not the Christmas gift and where she tells him the stories of her first visit to places. The strength of bonding could be seen in every next scene and it was beautifully shown.

**Comparison and Contrast:**

The difference between the two characters is the privilege and class difference. This is not only specific to Hoke but their maid Idella too. It could easily be seen in the movie that blacks had low privileges and they worked for whites be it maids or drivers or cleaners (Bonds & Inwood, 2016). It could be seen Daisy talking about her rights all the while she was demeaning her black servants at home. She placed no trust in people just based on their skin color. While the blacks had already seen so much inequality and disparity that they had accepted to serve their white masters as long as their self-respect was intact (DuBois, 2017). Hoke also showed a high level of tolerance aptitude as compared to Daisy. But on the other hand, both characters had some similarities too. They both had grown up in intense environments and poverty. They both had to struggle to get where they were today. They both had their pride and rules and did not compromise on the self-respect. This is the reason they both get along so well even till the very end.

**Summary**

 The movie is an excellent example for describing the transition phase where a racist goes from one extreme to another. Daisy had seen the disparity in society after the Civil War and mistreatment with the blacks. Hoke had suffered it all in silence and now he served his white masters. But if you look deeply into this story, you realize that race does not define a human being. His attributes and personality are all that matters. Hoke was able to win Daisy's heart not because he magically somehow changed his color but he showed to her the kind of gentleman he was. On many occasions, seeing him talk to the maid, and helping around the house, tolerance and good behavior were his trademarks. So this story is a lesson that skin solo is just a physical feature, the actual human being is what lies beneath that skin.

**References**

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