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Movie Review: Hidden Figures (2016)

The movie, *Hidden Figures* (2016), not only serves as an item of good entertainment, but is also admirable in depicting the scientific changes in the USA in the 1960s, the social life issues of that era, and differences that existed in the country, especially among African-Americans. The movie centers around the lives of three women: Katherine Johnson, who is recreated by movie star Taraji P. Henson; Mary Jackson, who is played by Janelle Mon 的; and finally, Dorothy Vaughan, as the mathematician prayed by Octavia Spencer. Essentially, all three women of African-American backgrounds, they play vital roles in society through their contributions while working at NASA towards the successful launch of a spaceship into orbit.

As an informative movie, it shows the condition of African-Americans among the wider USA community and some of the issues they faced. These include gender imbalances, as well as racial discriminations. From a historical perspective, the film shows a depiction of the Jim Crow rule, which created ideologies of segregation—requiring some buildings and facility spaces to be separated to ensure that races were kept apart (Edwards and Thomson, 146). The impact of such a rule is seen through Mary Jackson in facing opposition as a result of taking a course in physics at the graduate-level.

There is also a depiction of racial discrimination where there are separate toilets

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for white people and for colored people. Additionally, the film depicts differences in the social treatment of community members among various ethnic groups. As seen in the film, at the Langley Campus at NASA, even if African-Americans and white citizens work within the same vicinity, they are segregated — with African-Americans using separate dining facilities and bathrooms. This ranked as a key feature during the Jim Crow years acting as a tool for the unequal treatment of African-Americans (Edwards and Thomson, 145). In the film, Katherine Johnson is seen running from her office just to visit the washrooms, sometimes even in the rain.

The film, *Hidden Figures*, is also important in showing the social differences between men and women in historic America. There is a sense of prejudice and workplace bias towards women from their fellow men counterparts. One scene from the film depicts Katherine Johnson (played by Taraji P. Henson), who is skilled in computing and at explaining information to the board, yet sidelined and prevented from being among the men by Paul Stafford, a lead engineer on the project. Rather, she is forced to relinquish her presentation files to men, as opposed to making the presentation herself. However, with changes and acceptance, Katherine is finally allowed to present, especially with the support of Al Harrison.

The film also shows the importance and impact that the three women played in shaping the subsequent at NASA, and in shaping the whole community. Through power and determination, the women act as motivators for other women, especially African-American women. As seen with Dorothy working with other white women and commanding several computers, she gets bypass for upcoming promotions within the company for the role of supervisor. Also, Dorothy is treated maliciously by fellow co-workers and her boss. However, with perseverance, she encourages fellow African-American women to take up programming lessons as a way of preparing themselves for the changes in computing.

With all of the dramatic prejudice and issues undertaken by these three women,

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the movie does an excellent job in portraying past issues faced by African-Americans, explaining scientific changes in USA, and in creating a vivid picture of the social differences in gender in the 1960s.

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Works Cited

Edwards, Frances L., and Grayson Bennett Thomson. "The Legal Creation of Raced Space: The Subtle and Ongoing Discrimination Created through Jim Crow Laws." *Berkeley Journal of African-American Law & Policy* 12.1 (2010): 145-167.

Hidden Figures, Movie. (2016).

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