

Racial and Gender Discrimination Reflected in Theodore Melfi's *Hidden Figures*

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Abstract

The United States of America has a long history of discrimination based on race and gender. People were divided according to their race, religion, and skin tone. Both black males and their white partners discriminated against African American women. The application of Jim Crow Laws worsened their situation. Both individual and institutional discrimination had to be endured by them. Uncovering the racial and gender inequality faced by African American women is one of the themes explored in Theodore Melfi's *Hidden Figure*. The study's goals were to look at the fight for equality as a response to the prejudice towards people of color and women that three important female characters in Theodore Melfi's movie *Hidden Figures* experienced. A book by Margot Lee Shetterly served as the inspiration for the movie. The writers employed sociological, historical, and descriptive analytic methods to analyze this research. Through conducting library research, data was acquired. The main information was taken directly from the film, while the supporting information was gathered from books, magazines, and other sources related to English literature. The collected data were organized and evaluated before being used in the article. This research made it clear to the writers that the movie expressed opposition to discrimination against African American women. The three female protagonists of the movie experienced a variety of sorts of prejudice from their society, both at home and at work. The protagonists struggled with having to create their identities to be accepted by their society, especially by their coworkers at their place of employment who treat them equally and without any discrimination. They eventually won the right to be treated equally and were freed from various types of bias after considerable struggle and self-justification.

Keywords: racial and gender discrimination, hidden figures, Jim Crow Laws, segregation, black women

1. Introduction

Kidwai states that films transport the audience to a different world and display the entire scene visually to assist the audience to connect with the moment more deeply. This eliminates the need for the audience to use their imagination as readers of a literary work do (Sumarsono, 2022). Films are particularly transcendent artistic mediums because they enable narrators to intimately depict a lived experience for large viewers of individuals across time, character, and location. The best movies may broaden our empathy and perception, educate and instruct us, and, ultimately, ideally, inspire us to take actual action (Esquire Editors, 2021). Films are so vital to society that they allow us the chance to consider our own lives as well as the lives of those who are different from us and who may be able to provide us with a fresh outlook on life. They stand for identification with the imaginary world that they have built in their minds and hearts. Films are regarded as one of America's most well-liked art forms and may even be its most significant contribution to global culture (Jenkins, 2022).

The past and present of society are reflected in the film. The movie and its inventions occasionally have to catch up with society, but other times they also set the pace for it. Movies are narratives; created by actors who have ideas for what they want to convey or how they want to communicate with the audience. Movies are a kind of communication, and the narrative they depict is based on actual occurrences from both past and present society (Helen, 2013). Many movies with a social focus are based on actual occurrences and aid the audience in understanding. Sometimes these films leave the characters with a clear understanding that points to the big picture, while other times they leave the characters with an inquiry so that the audience can decide how they feel and leave it open to perception. In conclusion, films have a profound and significant influence on people and their cognitive processes (Sharma, 2022).

The *Hidden Figures* book and movie from 2016, even though only received three Oscar nominations; Best Adapted Screenplay (Allison Schroeder and Ted Melfi), Best Supporting Actress (Octavia Spencer), and Best Picture, it nevertheless managed to top the box office

(Mendelson, 2017), shed emphasis on the numerous contributions made by black women to astrophysics. Three individual black women's experiences are highlighted in the film *Hidden Figures*: Katherine Johnson, Dorothy Vaughan, and Mary Jackson. The movie tells the true story of Johnson, Jackson, and Vaughan, three black women who worked tirelessly to prepare astronaut John Glenn for his orbital trip despite facing prejudice, discrimination, and segregation (Lynn, 2019). This example of black women in astrophysics has been very significant in demonstrating to young women and people of color that they can overcome challenges and achieve success in the field (Zettler, 2020).

Jones adds that there are three main components to racism. First, racism stems from assumptions that ethnic distinctions reflect underlying biological differences. Second, racism entails clearly defined disapproval and prejudices toward other groups in comparison to one's own. Third, racism is a reflection of how different groups are treated by individuals and institutions in ways that are justified and frequently lead to undesirable outcomes (Scott, 2007). Individual discrimination covers the attitudes that fall under the categories of "prejudice," "implicit bias," and possibly other attitudes and behaviors that are not typically characterized as prejudice but contribute to justifying or executing racism. Institutional prejudice is concentrated on formal institutions and both their overt and covert regulations. It might seem like overtly racist laws governing how people should be treated, such as the outright exclusion of non-white members, students, or workers (Hirschman, 2020)

In the past, Black Americans have been disproportionately exposed to both institutional racism (i.e., laws, regulations, and practices that uphold racial disparities and barriers to opportunity, such as residential and educational segregation) and individual racism, for example, directly perceived discriminatory interactions between individuals (Bleich, et.al., 2019). In actuality, they continued to experience oppression, discrimination, and uneven chances in comparison to white people. Black Americans in general endured a considerable deal of hardship, but black women, in particular, endured more than black men. Black women had to battle both gender and racial prejudice. Degler states that the Whites in the colony never presume that black people share their status, and they are always given distinct treatment and regarded as inferior to white people (Pertiwi & Permatasari, 2022).

The discrimination was supported by the Jim Crow Laws that segregated people racially. Jim Crow Laws, or racial segregation, were states and local laws that came into effect in the Southern United States after the Reconstruction era and lasted there until 1965. Jim Crow laws required that white people and black people used separate facilities, restaurants, public transportation, and even taps (Nisa, 2019). Jim Crow Laws were intended to constitute "separate but equal" treatment, but in reality, they forced black individuals to use inferior services and facilities. The most significant Jim Crow laws mandated that white and black people have separate access to public spaces including restrooms, water fountains, buses, and trains (Hansan, 2011).

This study aims to depict the types of discrimination and the search for equality depicted in the film and to ascertain how blacks and whites felt about it. Consequently, this study examines the racial issues between blacks and whites that are depicted in the film. Furthermore, it's crucial to talk about racial issues to understand how black Americans react to racism and gain equality particularly at work and at NASA.

2. Methodology of the Research

To describe the racist phenomena based on a genuine story as it is reflected in this movie, the writers employed the qualitative method and applied the sociological approach. According to Elizabeth & Burns (1973), the sociological method demonstrates the relationship between literature and society, demonstrating how literature is both a product of and a response to society (Nensia, 2020). The goal of the method is to discuss the historical dimensions of racial discrimination that the film portrays.

Theodore Melfi's 2015 film *Hidden Figures*, which is an adoption of Margot Lee Shetterly's book of the same name and is based on the true tale of Katherine Johnson, Dorothy Vaughan, and Mary Jackson, contained the dialogues and circumstances from which the source data was gathered. The secondary data, however, came from encyclopedias, historical books, magazines of English literature, and online pieces. The main data were collected by watching the film to get a sense of racial discrimination. The writers also made note-taking of the scenes and dialogues that reflect the racial discrimination.

The writers started by performing numerous steps in the data analysis. putting the gathered information into categories, mapping it, and connecting it to the story to discover how the setting relates to the motivations behind a particular backdrop, set, and location, evaluating the relationship between primary and secondary data, watching the movie, breaking it down into paragraphs, and drawing conclusions.

3. Literature Review

To get more understanding of the focus of the research, the writers read some articles dealing with racial discrimination. The writers have to be familiar with what racial discrimination means. Racial discrimination is any policy or practice that targets the members of a race or ethnic group with persecution or mistreatment because of their race or ethnicity (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017).

The writers also read an article written by Hidayatullah, et.al., who studied the racism reflected in John Grisham's *A Time to Kill*. They concluded that *A Time to Kill* depicts racial tensions between blacks and whites in the South of the United States of America from the 1960s to the 1970s. The novel is about white prejudice who treat black people and white people who support them unfairly through racial prejudice, segregation, discrimination, intimidation, and extermination. They also concluded that the novel wants to say that not all white people are racist because some of them have a heart for black people and actively participate in civil rights activities to further their cause. In addition, the novel wants to make it clear that to live in harmony with diversity, respect, and admiration for others are required,

regardless of their ethnicity, status, or skin color (Hidayatullah et al, 2014).

The writers have also read Raharjo's article, in which he claims that Dee Rees' *Mudbound* demonstrates racism toward African-Americans. They face prejudice as a result of Jim Crow laws. Separation or segregation between whites and blacks is governed by the law. Inequality in life between blacks and whites is a result of segregation. Black individuals cannot travel freely everywhere, particularly in public spaces (Raharjo, 2020).

The next article the writers read is written by Fauziah in which she states that since their statuses are even lower than those of groups who have a similar inferior position to them, it is evident that Katherine, Dorothy, and Mary have faced many threats. They also experience discrimination from them since they are black ladies. It is also shown that their particular situation and experiences enable them to raise the numerous consciousnesses that no other inferior group possessed. They can fight against injustice, gain respect as people, and finally realize their aspirations with its assistance (Fauziah, 2019).

4. Result and Discussion

4.1 Jim Crow Laws in Hidden Figures

Racial discrimination or usually called racism is a long history in the United States of America. People were segregated based on their tribe, skin color, and gender. Black African Americans were the ones who experienced racial discrimination almost in any aspect of their life. Racial segregation was enforced using what is called Jim Crow Laws. This law segregated or separated the blacks from the whites almost in any aspect of life. The Jim Crow Laws were enforced to prevent contact between blacks and whites as equals. The laws were enforced not only in the South but also in the North. The laws segregated blacks from whites in public transportation, public schools, libraries, restaurant, and so on. The blacks were also discriminated against in getting proper jobs, proper salaries, proper education, health, etc. The blacks had to sit in the back seat of the bus while the white seat was in the front. When the front seat was occupied, the blacks had to let the white occupy their seats.

Hidden Figures reflects the racial discrimination faced by black African American women. The director through the three main characters, Katherine Johnson, Dorothy Vaughan, and Mary Jackson shows the audience the racial and gender discrimination that they have to face and how they fight against it until their existence is accepted and treated equally. The director also shows the discrimination by displaying the enforcement of the Jim Crow Laws in the movie, but what has been reflected in the movie does not represent all the racial discrimination that the blacks have to face. There is still so much discrimination that blacks have to face in the real life that is not reflected in the movie.

The enforcement of Jim Crow Laws in the movie can be seen in the scenes where the blacks are separated from the whites. There are two groups of workers in NASA as depicted in the movie, the blacks and the white. The black African American women who work for NASA as human computers have to work in a room called West Computing Unit, while the whites work in a different room called the East Computing Unit. Each place is completed with different facilities, and of course, the east one has more facilities than the west. The West Computing Unit is tiny, dark, and crowded, while the East one has a bigger and wider, brighter, and more facilitated office. Their restrooms are also separated from the white, so there are two kinds of restrooms, the white restroom with complete facilities and the colored restroom, of course with limited facilities. The black African Americans in this film also have to drink from the different water fountains. The black African American cannot borrow the books on the white shelf from the library. The only books that they can borrow are the books on the black shelf. The Jim Crow Laws also segregate where the blacks can live and build their houses. They are not allowed to live in white people's neighborhoods. They have to go to a different church, the church for the colored one.

Black people have to live in a certain place separated from white families. They have to live at Newsome Park. It is a place built by the blacks for the blacks. Many black people who migrate from their place choose to settle down here. This place attracts residents from different occupations and different levels. Although the three women are hired by NASA, they are forced to live under Jim Crow Laws.

Black and white individuals have found it difficult to communicate due to the application of segregation. It prevents people from getting to know and comprehend one another. A growth in skepticism and doubt in society is the worst that may occur. It will maintain society's preconceptions and stereotypes from changing. Segregation can lead to an ongoing struggle between whites and blacks in society and makes it difficult for those who are discriminated against to contribute their ideas to the advancement of the nation.

4.2 The Racial Discrimination Faced by the Black Women

The three black women in this movie, Katherine Johnson, Dorothy Vaughan, and Mary Jackson have to face racial and gender discrimination anywhere, not only in society but also at their workplace. They experience multiple discrimination, starting from individual, institutional, and structural discrimination. Individual discrimination becomes the source of any other discrimination. The film displays some examples of individual discrimination that can be seen in how white employees at NASA treat their black fellows. Institutional and structural discrimination can be seen in how the country and NASA create their policies and the hiring system at NASA.

Although NASA has accommodated their skills and qualifications as its employees since they have the qualification to support NASA in the space war against Russia, they still have to face the discrimination conducted by the system and the individuals, especially the white colleagues. Ironically, NASA still applies the Jim Crow Laws in its workplace. Discrimination toward black African Americans takes place anywhere and anytime and can happen to any black person. They are the victims of racism in the forms of discrimination, segregation, racial prejudice, and intimidation

Katherine, Dorothy, and Mary face discrimination when their car is broken into on their way to the office. They have to face the racial prejudice done by the white cop. The cop has a negative stereotype to see black women stop their car, not in the proper place. The white police officer who sees them treats them racially. He questions them suspiciously since they stop their car at an improper location. He underestimates them and does not believe that they work for NASA. He thinks that black people do not deserve to work for NASA which is competing against Russia in space exploration. He thinks that blacks do not have the qualification to work for NASA.

White Cop: "Not a great place for the three of you to be having car trouble.

Mary: "We didn't pick the place, Officer. It picked us.

White Cop: "You disrespectful?"

Mary: "No, sir."

White Cop: "You have identification on you?"

Katherine: "We sure do. We are just on our way to work. At Langley. NASA, sir".

Dorothy: "We do a great deal of calculating getting our rockets into space".

White Cop: "All three of you?"

Mary: "Yes, Officer".

White Cop: "NASA. That's something. Had no idea they hired..." (Melfi, 00:04:31-00:05:02)

The dialogue above indicates that the cop is doubt the truth that they work for NASA. The white cop then asks them to follow his car to the NASA headquarters. Driving after the white cop's car is a kind of miracle for the three of them. They feel what they do is like chasing a white officer down the highway, something rare to happen or never happen.

Racial discrimination also happens to black people dealing with positions and salaries in the workplace. Black people are treated unfairly by white ones. There is no permanent position given to the blacks, although they are qualified to support NASA. All positions that are available for blacks are temporary. They cannot get certain positions in the workplace although their duties are similar to the duties done by a white employee in that position. Dorothy has the responsibility and duties of a supervisor, but she cannot be promoted to supervisor. Although she does the supervisor's job, she works hard but gets a lower salary. She has the right to get the salary a supervisor can get. Black employees get smaller salaries compared to white ones, but they get more jobs to do than white ones (Melfi, 2016, 00.12.03 - 00.12.35). The urgent jobs that have to finish in a short time are always given to the black, while the easier jobs are given to the white. Only the white can get a permanent position.

White people never give an important position to African American women. African American women only deserve to get a temporary position, not a permanent one. African American women can only get the secondary position, while the primary one is given to white people. The secondary position gets different facilities from the primary one. The secondary position gets a lower salary, poor facilities, and a limited chance to develop, while the primary one can get a better and higher salary, complete facilities, and have unlimited opportunities to advance themselves.

When IBM can do their jobs, they will lose their jobs. Dorothy knows that their position as human computers can be replaced by IBM, so she tries to be familiar with IBM. She studies and learns how IBM works. When she succeeds in learning how IBM works, she teaches her black fellows.

Dorothy; My application for supervisor, ma'am. Was wondering if they're still considering me for that position.

Vivian Mitchell: Yes. Well, the official word is: no. They're not assigning a permanent supervisor to the Colored Group. (Dorothy is sunk)

Dorothy; I see. May I ask why?

Vivian Mitchell; I don't know "why." I didn't ask "why."

Dorothy; We need a supervisor, ma'am. Haven't had one since Ms. Jansen got sick. Been almost a year.

Vivian Mitchell; Things are workin' just fine as is, Dorothy.

Dorothy; I do the work of a Supervisor. I'm in charge of the Group, like a Supervisor. (Melfi, 12:07 - 12:34)

Katherine Johnson, who has a strong understanding of analytic geometry also experienced racial discrimination. She is treated unfairly by the white employees at NASA. When she is needed by NASA, Ms. Mitchell forbids her to talk to Mr. Harrison, unless Mr. Harrison wants to talk to her. She is also told that no black people before her worked with Mr. Harrison. She is underestimated by Ms. Mitchell who thinks that she cannot work for the Space Task Group for a longer time. What Ms. Mitchell does to Katherine comes from her racial attitude. When she enters the room, she is considered a janitor who is taking the trash bin out of the room, and all people glance at her disrespectfully and suspiciously. No people say hi or talk to her. They all just watch her entering the room with suspicious thoughts. The secretary of the Space Task Group asks her to seat in the back row and asks her not to hope that Mr. Harrison will welcome her warmly. She is also underestimated and treated unpleasantly by Paul Stafford, the lead engineer at the Space Task Group. He thinks that he can do the calculation by himself and does not need Katherine to do his work. He blackens the numbers in his calculation and asks her to find the

answer in her way. As the black employee who works with white men, she does not get the same facilities as the white. She cannot drink coffee from the same pot as the white does, and she does not either get a restroom. Once she drinks coffee from their pot, they provide her with a smaller pot, but without any coffee. There is no restroom for the colored people in the Space Task Group, so she must run to the west computing unit, because the colored restroom is only available there, and it is not close to getting to the west computing unit. She is forbidden to write her name on the report, although she is the one who does the calculation. She is interrogated and suspected as a Russian spy when she succeeds with her calculation. As a member of the Space Task Group, she is even forbidden to join a meeting with the Pentagon, although for the success of the launch, finally she is allowed and succeeded to calculate in front of the Pentagon officers.

Al Harrison; Are you a spy, Katherine?

Katherine; Am I what?

Al Harrison; Are you a Russian spy?

Katherine: No, sir, I'm not Russian. (Melfi, 00.44.02 - 00.44.58)

Since there is no restroom for the colored one, she always leaves her table every day anytime she needs to piss. The colored restroom is not close to the Space Task Group building. When she is questioned by Mr. Harrison about why she always leaves before the break, she tells her angrily why she does it. This is one of the ways she struggles against discrimination, and the result is that Mr. Harrison makes all people in NASA have the same restroom, no white restroom, and neither black one. This is one of the victories Katherine has in fighting against racial discrimination.

Katherine; There's no bathroom here. There are no COLORED bathrooms in this building or ANY building outside the West Campus. Which is half a mile away! Did you know that? I have to walk to Timbuktu just to relieve myself! And I can't take one of the handy bikes. Picture that, with my uniform: skirt below the knees and my heels. And don't get me started about the "simple pearl necklace" I can't afford. Lord knows you don't pay "the coloreds enough for that. And I work like a dog day and night, living on coffee from a coffee pot half of you don't want me to touch! So, excuse me if I have to go to the restroom a few times (Melfi, 1:01:49 - 1:02:46).

Mary Jackson is transferred to the test team because her ability is needed. Zielinski, the head of the engineer, is very impressed with her ability. He encourages her to join the engineering training program, but she says that she cannot do it. She knows that she is a black woman. She cannot be an engineer. When she is about to get the opportunity, she is told that NASA never lets women get national engineering training, although she qualifies. The only engineering program that is approved by NASA is the University of Virginia or Hampton High School. This university and High School do not accept blacks as their students. The discrimination tries to block Mary from being an engineer by giving her more difficult requirements. (Melfi, 46.45 - 47.06). The blacks cannot go to certain schools or universities. They never let the blacks study there. They are special for white people. When Mary has to go to court to get the right to continue her study, she is asked to seat in the back row, and she gets permission to study at that university, but she has to go to the night school.

Mary Jackson has an inferiority feeling being one of the black women who work for NASA. Her inferiority feeling makes her feel that she cannot be an engineer since she is a black woman. She has no power to make her dream to be an engineer. The racial and gender discrimination causes her to have negative self-esteem. Because of her boss's support, she can increase her confidence and self-esteem to apply for the engineering program. Zielinski, her boss, succeeds in convincing her that she has the capability. He motivates her to make her dream come true.

Racial discrimination has two effects on the victims; the negative effects and the positive ones. The psychologically damaging effects of prejudice can cause mental health difficulties, low self-esteem, extraneous locus of control, cultural mistrust, and other traits that make people more vulnerable to mental health concerns. The positive impact is increasing self-confidence if it allows alien attribution than self-blame (Versey & Curtin, 2015). Workplace discrimination on the footing of sexual orientation and gender identity has a big financial impact. Employer discrimination causes a mismatch between qualified workers and the positions they are most qualified for. This discrepancy hurts firms, employees, and the economy by reducing productivity. Reducing prejudice based on sexual orientation and gender identity has significant advantages. According to a report, pro-diversity policies boost revenue (Klobuchar, 2013). All three protagonists in *Hidden Figures* succeed in boosting their positive self-esteem. They prove that black African Americans are worthy and have the capability, skill, and qualification to work. They succeed in motivating themselves to prove that they are not different from the whites, moreover, they are much better than the whites, and do not deserve to be discriminated against.

4.3 Gender Discrimination Faced by Black Women

Hidden Figures portrays not only the racial discrimination faced by African American women but also the gender discrimination. The movie proves that racial and gender discrimination are intertwined. The intertwined discrimination of race and gender can strengthen and worsen discrimination in society. African American women have to face not only racial but also gender discrimination conducted by white men, white women, and black men. They commit discrimination against black women because they want to maintain their position and power in society.

4.3.1 White Men's Discrimination towards Black Women

White men feel superior in race and gender position. Their feeling of superiority causes racial and gender discrimination takes place anytime toward black women. Melfi in his *Hidden Figures* displays this gender discrimination. It can be seen when Katherine enters the room of the NASA Task Force Group. Every white man in the room is looking at her as an outsider. One of them, Sam Turner considers her a slave. He even does not ask her anything, but he suddenly hands a trash bin to her. He never sees her before, but he has a negative stereotype toward black women. He considers black women not to have any qualifications to work at NASA as an expert. He thinks that Katherine is the kind of office woman whose responsibility is to take care of the trash. At her new workplace, there are a lot of things that white men and women can do, but she cannot do. She gets a lot of restrictions that block her from doing her duties well. Although she has the qualification to work for NASA, she can be more qualified than all the white employees there, because she is black, so she is treated differently. Even in her way to dress, she also experiences a kind of discrimination. As a black employee, she has to wear a certain uniform that is different from the white one. She knows that she is treated as the middle class in society. She knows that she cannot wear the same uniform as the whites since the blacks are treated differently from the whites. They cannot get the same salary the white people get. This thing is experienced by all three protagonists in this movie.

4.3.2 White Women's Discrimination towards Black Women

Ideally, all women, black and white, have to struggle together against men's domination in the patriarchal system, but since they have different statuses and races in society, white women tend to have prejudice and negative perception towards black ones. Discrimination towards black women by white ones can take place anywhere. In *Hidden Figures*, it is displayed when Dorothy accompanies her children to the library. When she cannot find the book that she is looking for in the black section, she goes to the white one. The white librarian has a prejudice that Dorothy will cause trouble. This scene describes how gender discrimination takes place and is conducted by white women. It can be said that white women have anti-black women feeling. They are irritated by the black women's presence around them.

White Librarian: "We don't want any trouble in here."

Dorothy: "I'm not here for any trouble."

White Librarian: "What are you for?"

Dorothy: "A book."

White Librarian: "You have books in the colored section."

Dorothy: "It doesn't have what I'm looking for." White Librarian: "That's just the way it is."

A security guard escorts Dorothy and her boys, not so gently, out of the library. The guard grabs the kids' shoulders, moving them along (Melfi, 00:49:42-00:50:06).

The three black women in *Hidden Figures* are also discriminated against by the white employees at their workplaces. They are treated differently from white employees. Black African American women are treated unfairly and negatively. White employees always have negative stereotypes towards the black women who work at their workplace. The white women always avoid seeing or talking to the black. They see and talk to them only when they have something that they need from them. They also consider the blacks as their competitors who can steal their position anytime.

4.3.3 Black Men's Discrimination towards Black Women

There are some data we can get from the movie that shows how black men discriminate against black women. One of them is the conversation between Katherine and Jim Johnson. Jim never thinks that Katherine can have a job at NASA. He thinks that it is serious and heavy work for women. It makes Katherine offended since as a woman she is considered incapable to work at NASA. She feels humiliated by Jim and defends herself by showing her ability and capability in her work. Although Jim Johnson does not want to humiliate her. He does it just because he is surprised to hear that Katherine works in the aeronautical sector.

Katherine: I'll have you know, I was the first Negro female student at West Virginia University Graduate School. On any given day I analyze the manometer levels for air displacement, friction, and velocity and computer over 10,000 calculations by cosine, square root, and lately Analytic Geometry. By hand. There are 20 bright, highly capable Negro women in the West Computing Group. And we're proud to be doing our part for the country.... So, yes...they let women do some things over at NASA, Mr. Johnson. But it's not because we wear skirts...it's because we wear glasses (Melfi, 36:49 - 37:29).

The quotation above shows how Katherine feels humiliated by Jim and she responds to him by mentioning some of her accomplishments as a capable black woman, which she is proud of. She wants to demonstrate that women are capable and worthy of working at NASA. Katherine displays her accomplishments confidently.

Another example of black men's discrimination towards black women can be also seen in the conversation between Mary Jackson and her husband, Levi. Mary Jackson's husband, Levi Jackson, initially tries to talk her out of becoming an engineer. He says that Mary should be a good mother to their children, stays at home taking care of the children, and never dreams to be an engineer since she is a black woman. He does not want her to be disappointed since NASA never gives women, especially black women, a position that they deserve to get. It is no use for Mary to get her engineering degree because it will never change her position.

Levi Jackson; All I'm saying, don't play a fool. I don't want to see you get hurt. NASA's never given you gals your due, having another degree won't change that. Civil rights ain't always civil,"(Melfi, 34:24 - 34:35).

These two black men, Jim Johnson, and Levi Jackson, finally can make an important transformation, from seeing their women negatively becoming men who can open their eyes and see that women have the capability and ability to work.

4.4 Black Women's Efforts against the Discrimination

Although all three protagonists in this movie have to face multiple discrimination, they never try to avoid or run away from that discrimination. They fight against discrimination by doing their work professionally. Dorothy proves and shows the white people that the blacks can give full service to the place they work for with full dedication. She and the women under her supervision succeed in making IBM work. Dorothy succeeds in getting the promotion to programmer for IBM, but she refuses it if she is not allowed to invite all her black fellows to work with her. She fights to get equality not for herself, but for all black women in the West Computing Group. She finally succeeds in getting her promotion as the supervisor and 30 of her women are promoted to permanent programmers. Finally, Ms. Mitchell addresses her as Ms. Vaughan, something that she never does to Dorothy. It symbolizes that Dorothy has succeeded in making the white have to pay respect to her.

Katherine Johnson succeeds in entering the Space Task Group. She is the first black woman who ever enters the group. She succeeds in making calculations needed by NASA. She also succeeds in making some changes after the racial discrimination that she has to face. She succeeds in making NASA have the same restrooms, no colored restrooms, or white restrooms. She makes all people drink coffee from the same thermos. People at NASA piss the same color, just like Mr. Harrison says. She succeeds to calculate for Friendship 7 and is trusted by John Glenn, the next astronaut who will fly with Friendship 7. John Glenn will never fly if Katherine does not give her the right calculation. Katherine who has been sent back to the West Computing Group after IBM succeed in making calculations much better and much faster than the humancomputer is asked to be back to work for the Space Task Group. The most important thing is her success in bringing Friendship 7 to space and bringing it back with John Glenn to earth.

Mary Jackson succeeds in making the judge give her agreement to her petition to continue her study at Hampton. She gets her education to be an engineer at a university that black people are never allowed to enter. She becomes the first black woman to study there, although she must attend the night study that starts at 9 pm.

All three protagonists in the film manage to face racial discrimination by the institution and the individual at their workplace because they are educated, qualified, and never got desperate. They manage to empower themselves and the other black people in their workplace. With their education, skills, and qualifications they can prove to the world that black people, especially black women can do what white people do, moreover what they do can be much better than white people can do. They are also able to prove to the world that racial discrimination just brings negative effects to society. It can be an obstacle to development. They proved that with their help as the computer humans in NASA, they succeed in helping NASA in competing against Russia.

Whatever the three protagonists in this movie do, reflects the struggles of the black African American women in facing racial discrimination, and fighting against it to get equal rights as the citizens of the USA. They are the representation, particularly of all black African American women, and black people in general. The racial discrimination they face has motivated them to be more responsible and ensure that the next generation will never experience what they do. Their works have at least made them get equal rights, such as certain positions that the blacks cannot obtain, which becomes more possible. They manage to decrease discrimination at least in their work at NASA. They teach the audience how to face problems. They never run away from the discrimination they face, they keep struggling, thinking positively, and never giving up to get a better future, not only for themselves but also for their people, the black African Americans in general. What we have seen in this film brought by the director does not reflect all the racial discrimination that happens to the blacks, but at least it is a representation of the racial discrimination that the blacks have to face.

Katherine succeeds in becoming a permanent employee of NASA and she reviews the calculations for the next astronaut. Dorothy becomes the first black supervisor at NASA, and Mary becomes the first black female engineer. Their dedication at work has made the USA win the space war, and because of this film, the three black women get awards from their government.

5. Conclusion

Hidden Figures highlights the quest for equality and the battle against the prejudice that African American women in the US face. In both their personal and professional lives, women of color had to deal with institutional and individual discrimination, which is depicted in the film as a brutal reality. To significantly contribute to the American space program, the three major female protagonists in the movie had to overcome a variety of biases, including sexism and racism. To be accepted by their society and contemporaries, they had to forge their identities. Their battle serves as a reminder of the value of resiliency and tenacity in the face of difficulty.

The sociological, historical, and descriptive analytic techniques used in the study shed light on the movie's themes by exposing the racial and gender inequity that African American women experience. The movie expresses opposition to prejudice against African American women, according to the compiled and reviewed data from the film and other sources relevant to English literature.

The film serves as a reminder of the value of social activity in fostering a more just and equal society as well as the strength of group efforts. The three female protagonists struggled against prejudice and bigotry at work, ultimately obtaining the right to receive equal treatment and be free from various forms of discrimination.

Last but not least, "Hidden Figures" is a moving and motivational film that emphasizes the continuous fight for civil rights in the United States. The film's themes of adaptability, tenacity, and teamwork serve as a reminder of the necessity for ongoing attention and action in the struggle against racism and discrimination. The movie motivates us to keep striving for a more egalitarian society where everyone is treated with respect and dignity regardless of their gender or color.

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