



**BLACK WOMEN'S STRUGGLE IN FACING WORKPLACE  
DISCRIMINATION IN THEODORE MELFI'S *HIDDEN FIGURES***

**A THESIS**

**In Partial of the Requirements for Sarjana Degree  
Majoring American Cultural Studies in English Department  
Faculty of Humanities Diponegoro University**

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## **PRONOUNCEMENT**

The writer honestly confirms that she compiles this thesis entitled by herself and without taking any results from other researchers in S-1, S-2, S-3 and in diploma degree of any university. The writer ascertains also that she does not quote any material from other publications or someone's paper except from the references mentioned.

Semarang, August 6<sup>th</sup> 2020

Salma 'Azizah

## MOTTO AND DEDICATION

“There is no wealth like knowledge, no poverty like ignorance”

- *Ali Bin Abi Thalib*

“Life consists of two days, one for you and one against you. So when it’s for you don’t be proud or reckless, andd when it’s against you be patient, for both days are test for you.”

- *Ali Bin Abi Thalib*

*This thesis is dedicated to my beloved family,  
who always support me and my friends, who  
help and build me up in my down*

**APPROVAL**

**BLACK WOMEN'S STRUGGLE IN FACING WORKPLACE  
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Finally, I expect that this thesis will be useful to the reader who wishes to learn something about Black women discrimination.

Semarang, August 6<sup>th</sup> 2020

Salma 'Azizah



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## ABSTRACT

*Hidden Figures*, directed by Theodore Melfi, is a movie which is based on a true story. The story of the movie focuses on the discrimination of Black women in workplace. The purpose of this thesis is to analyze the double discrimination of African-American women in workplace which is depicted in *Hidden Figures* movie. The writer uses library research to collect the data to support the discussion of this thesis. The writer analyzes intrinsic and extrinsic aspects to show the double discrimination experienced by the main characters of the movie. The intrinsic aspects that will be analyzed are cinematography aspects and narrative elements which contain some aspects, such as theme, character, setting, and conflict. The writer uses Patricia Hill Collin's theories in analyzing Black feminism in workplace which is explained in the extrinsic aspects. The result of this thesis proves that the main characters of this movie reflect the value of Black feminism. Black feminism value which brings consciousness raising of Black women can make a great change to improve their lives.

*Keywords: Racial Discrimination, Sexual Discrimination, Black feminism, Workplace Discrimination.*

## **CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Background of the Study**

The world nowadays changes unconsciously from time to time. Although the change is obscure, it is still considered as the contributor to the world movement progress. Delastuti (2016) argues that the world movement which is being discussed today is a movement that transforms old-fashioned women into modern women. The movement delivers a new perspective of women itself. Women are no longer the second after men and also wWhite women are not superior to Black women. Now, they have the same right to do anything in society.

Though most women nowadays are actively transforming to be individuals who are more independent, smart, and modern but still, there are some women in this case are Black women who could not express their talent freely and still receive racially oppressed in the women's movement and sexually oppressed in the Black Liberation Movement. Instead of being treated the same way in society, Black woman still gets some discrimination. As an example, in 2017 in United States, Black women must work to earn 61 cents for every dollar earned by White men. It means it is \$23,653 less in earning over an entire year. Span of a 40 year career, pay gap between Black women and White men is \$946,120 (Frye, Jocelyn; 2019; <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/women/news/2019/08/22/473775/racism-sexism-combine-shortchange-working-black-women/>; accessed February 21<sup>th</sup> 2019).

As African-American women have passed cruel treatment throughout slavery era, this racial community has to face double discrimination from patriarchy capitalism and Whites supremacy in American society. Kovacevic (2016) argues that the half of the entire population in the world are being oppressed based on their gender. Since they were born, they are raised to obey to their fathers, their brothers, and their husbands who are not far for being treated like a property. Because of that discrimination, Black women did not only experience the oppression in domestic level but also to the stage of getting job vacancies.

The oppression which is experienced by Black women in domestic level or working place has been conveyed to some media. Movie is one of media to convey such thoughts that happened in society. Movies not only give entertainment for people but also send messages to viewers or audiences, helping to shape society's values and belief system (Terry, 2018:1).

The writer will analyze a movie entitled *Hidden Figures* which is directed by Theodore Melfi. The main theme of this film is about the discrimination that Black women received in workplace. The story is about African-American female mathematicians who need to struggle more in facing the discrimination when they worked at National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA).



## **1.2 Research Problem**

Based on the background of study, the problems of this study are going to be divided into three main analyses. The followings are the formulation of research problems:

1. What are the intrinsic elements used in *Hidden Figures*?
2. How is the workplace discrimination experienced by African-American women described in *Hidden Figures*?
3. How do the characters fight against the workplace discrimination which reflects Black feminism value in *Hidden Figures*?

## **1.3 Objectives of the Study**

The purposes on this study are:

1. To describe the intrinsic elements used in *Hidden Figures*.
2. To analyze the discrimination in workplace experienced by African-American Female in *Hidden Figure*.
3. To analyze how the characters fight against the workplace discrimination that reflects Black feminism value in *Hidden Figures*.

## **1.4 Scope of the Study**

The scope of this study is to analyze the struggle of African-American women especially in the 1960s when second wave feminism was rampant. They fight for the equality of their race and gender in facing the workplace oppressions experienced in *Hidden Figures*.

## **1.5 Method of Study**

### **1.5.1 Method of Research**

In collecting the data and information which will support the analysis of this research, the writer uses library research method.

Library research is not a mystery or a lucky dodge, but an investigation you control from start to finish, even though you cannot usually tell what sources you will discover. On the other side, library research is a form of structured inquiry with specific tools, rules, and technique (George, 2008) in (Dewi, 2017).

Besides using the movie as the main source to analyze this research, the writer also uses some books, journal articles, and other sources to support the analysis. Dewi (2017) states that the method of this research is limited on the library research because the data does not come from field and the data are collected from various references.

The analysis is conducted by watching *Hidden Figures* movie which is directed by Theodore Melfi. Some expressions and body languages which are showed by Dorothy Vaughan, Katherine Johnson, and Mary Jackson in the movie are analyzed to understand how rebellious they are toward the discrimination they receive in the workplace. The rebellious actions of Dorothy, Katherine and Mary that are showed in the movie are also compared with the result of observation of the related article journals which are written by other experts.

### **1.5.2 Method of Approach**

Method of approach is method used to analyze the data. The writer will analyze intrinsic and extrinsic elements of this movie. The intrinsic elements consist of

narrative element and cinematographic element. The narrative element explains about theme, character, setting, conflict, etc. To analyze the intrinsic element, the writer uses objective approach. The objective approach is an approach which analyzes a literary work solely as a literary work. It explains on M.H. Abrams in his book entitled *A Glossary of Literary Term*. He argues:

Objective criticism deals with a work of literature as something which stands free from what is often called “extrinsic” relations to the poet, or to the audience, or to the environing world. Instead it describes the literary product as a self-sufficient and autonomous object, or else as a world-in-itself, which is to be contemplated as its own end, and to be analyzed and judged solely by “intrinsic” criteria such as its complexity, coherence, equilibrium, integrity, and the interrelations of its component elements. (Abrams, 2008)

Meanwhile, the cinematographic element enlightens camera distance, angle of camera, and sound. Heiderich (2012) states that cinematographic element enlightens how different shots work together to create a clear, cohesive narrative and how to compose and set each shot in a way that is visually pleasing for the viewer.

To analyze the extrinsic element, the writer will analyze the act of main characters using Black feminism approach. Black feminism emphasizes the struggles to the process of African-American women which are fighting to have freedom to actualize themselves in all aspect of life (Keizer, 1989). But, the writer specializes the Black feminism theory which discusses much about Black women’s struggles in workplace. The writer uses Patricia Hill Collin’s thought to analyze the Black feminism in workplace. This theory will be focused on how the Black women get the double discrimination both as blacks and as women in

workplace and the concept of intersectionality that will correlate the description of multiple oppressions are experienced by Black women in the workplace.

## **1.6 Previous Studies**

*Hidden Figures* is a movie directed by Theodore Melfi. The story is about African-American female mathematicians who need to struggle more in facing the discrimination and oppression when they work at National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA). In analyzing the movie, the writer compares this study with other studies which have related topic.

The first related study the writer reviewed here is an article journal entitled “The Struggle of African American Female Character in Margot Lee Shatterly ‘s Novel *Hidden Figures*” written by Tiara Febrianti, Agnes Setyowati, and Ni Made Widisanti in 2018. The writer agrees with analysis saying that the discriminative action experienced by African-American women is the result from the past history of slavery era.

African-American women fight racial injustice that they underwent by creating women’s associations. This happened because Blacks protested against the injustice of Black’s refusal in public places, an initial problem when there was a law separating Blacks and Whites. The unfavorable relationship between Blacks and Whites was due to in the past to the enslavement of Blacks by Whites. As a result of these problems is the existence of a law that enforces separation so that the Whites really do not want to mingle and separate themselves with Blacks (Febrianti, Setyowati, and Widisanti, 2018).

The second related study the writer reviewed here is an undergraduate thesis entitled “The Struggle of African American Women against the Double

Discrimination Revealed in *Hidden Figures*” written by Tiara Ika Putri Christianingrum in 2018. Christianingrum argues that working in the field for African-American women is kind of privilege during Cold War. Therefore, they still get discrimination in workplace. They faced the discrimination not only in the workplace but also in all spectrums of their lives.

Although in that era, women already involve in the workplace, but they still get discrimination, especially the colored women. The prospect for an African-American women in the field could be viewed only dismal. As consequence, African-American women face the double discrimination because they are colored and they are women. The double discrimination exists in all spectrums of African-American women, including but not limited to, educational system, public facility, and extended to the workplace (Christianingrum, 2018).

The third related study the writer reviewed here is an undergraduate thesis entitled “The Representation of Black Female Characters as Black Feminists in *Hidden Figures* Movie” written by Destri Delastuti in 2016. Delastuti argues that self reliance, self empowerment, and independence are important for Black women who fight for freedom in Black feminist movement. In this thesis, the writer emphasis how Black women can be seen as independent women who have the same level as men in real life by improving self-valuation, self reliance, consciousness as spheres of freedom.

## **1.6 Organization of Writing**

In arranging this paper, the writer divided it into some chapters. Every chapter discusses about related problem that exist in this paper.

Chapter I INTRODUCTION

The first chapter of this study consists of background of the study, research problems, objective of the study, scope of the study, previous studies and organization of the writing.

Chapter II SYNOPSIS OF THE MOVIE

The second chapter consists of the summary of *Hidden Figures* movie.

Chapter III LITERARY REVIEW

The third chapter consists of the theory which is used to analyze intrinsic and extrinsic elements of the movie.

Chapter IV DISCUSSION

The fourth chapter consists of analysis of intrinsic and extrinsic elements in the movie which will be provided with evidence.

Chapter V CONCLUSION

This chapter will conclude the whole discussion and analysis from previous chapters.

## CHAPTER II

### SYNOPSIS OF THE MOVIE

#### 2.1 Synopsis

*Hidden Figures* highlights the story of three African-American female mathematicians, Dorothy Vaughan, Katherine Johnson, Mary Jackson, known as “human computers” who work in National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) to launch rockets into space for the first American orbital exploration. This rocket tries to beat Russian in the space race during the World War II.

The opening of this movie set in 1926, in White Sulphur Spring, West Virginia. At that time, young Katherine Johnson got full scholarship in West Virginia Collegiate Institute and she is considered as the genius student at her average age.

Then, in 1961, Dorothy Vaughan, Katherine Johnson, and Mary Jackson live and work in Hampton, West Virginia. At that place they got bad treatments from White people because of racial discrimination. At NASA office, the news about Russian’s launches their Koralb-Sputnik-4 satellite in orbit turns to be a trigger for the Space Task Group. But, the head department, Al Harison finds out that IBM (calculating machine) cannot support their work. That is why he urges the employees to find someone who masters in excels in Analytic Geometry.

Meanwhile, in West Computing Group, there are African-American female are hired to be human computers, including Dorothy, Katherine, and Mary. In this movie, Dorothy is head division in West Computing Group. Meanwhile

Mary is asked to be a new engineer assistant in NASA project. Katherine will fill the position in Space Task Group as geometrical analyst because of Dorothy recommendation.

One day Dorothy reminds her boss, Vivian Mitchell, about her supervisor application last year, but Vivian just ignores her. Vivian does not give the permanent position and also proper salary for Dorothy.

Mary starts her work as Assistant of White engineer. She witnesses the failure of wind testing of space capsule. Karl Zielinski, head of department, asks her opinion about the reason why wind testing is failed. Then, Karl feels amazed by her intelligence because she can answer that question well. Meanwhile, in another place, Katherine is escorted by Vivian to tell dos and do not while working in Space Task Division. At this building, she has to work with mostly White people so that she gets injustice treatments because of racial discrimination. She has to run to another building just for finding Black women bathroom. Although she gets bad treatments from her colleagues in workplace, she keeps on doing amazing and excellent works until her head department, Al Harrison notices her.

African-American women in West Computing Group face the new problem when IBM machine has arrived. Because of the arrival of that machine, the career of African-American women in West Computing Group will be threatened. Thankfully, Dorothy as the head of division in West Computing Group can master FORTRAN language to control IBM machine. That is why she



can reassign her employees in West Computing Group to control IBM machine along with her.

Meanwhile, Mary Johnson wins over petitions the court regarding to the enrollment on all-White people school. It makes her to be the only one student who attends the engineering class. That class will support her in working at NASA as an engineer. In another place, Katherine can show her ability toward her colleagues and her boss although she got some discrimination issues in workplace. It makes her boss change the system in placing the separating White and Black people bathroom to be one bathroom system. Besides that, her boss also changes some discrimination system which makes African-American women feels difficult to work in NASA. But one day, Katherine faces the problem when IBM machine has arrived. As the IBM machine arrived, the role of Katherine as the geometrical analyst will be replaced.

The spaceship “Friendship 7” is prepared and John Glenn is appointed to be its pilot. The day when John Glenn launch his mission as the pilot of “Friendship 7”, people of the world witness the historical moment of the first American astronaut who will go around the earth. But, in the control room, Al Harrison finds out that there is a problem of IBM calculation which does not match. To resolve that problem, John Glenn suggests Al to call Katherine again to recalculate the calculation. Finally, John Glenn succeeds to orbit around the earth safely although there is a little tension during reentry. The movie ends with a good accomplishment of Dorothy Vaughan, Katherine Johnson, and Mary Jackson.

## 2.2 Short Biography of Theodore Melfi

Theodore Melfi was born on October 27, 1970 in Brooklyn, New York, USA as Theodore Michael Melfi (wallofcelebrities.com editor; 2016; <https://www.wallofcelebrities.com/celebrities/theodore-melfi/biography.html>; accessed October 19<sup>th</sup> 2019). Theodore Melfi is an American screenwriter, film director, and director. Theodore Melfi has a unique family. His father is a mobster and his mother is a former nun. After graduating from Missouri State University, Ted moved to Los Angeles. At Los Angeles he worked at the small eatery Pasta Place as a strip club security guard. He claimed that it was the worst job he ever had. He joined into film by accident when an acquaintance asked if he knew how to produce a film. Then, he learned how to direct the film by reading the book *Film Directing Shot by Shot* (Semlyen, Nick De; 2017; <https://www.empireonline.com/movies/features/director-theodore-melfi-oscar-nominated-hidden-figures/>; accessed October 19<sup>th</sup> 2019).

His first film was *St. Vincent* starring Bill Murray which was released in 2014. Then, in 2016 Melfi became co-wrote, directed and produced *Hidden Figures*. From this film, he received Oscar nominations for Best Picture and Best Adapted Screenplay. Besides *St. Vincent* and *Hidden Figures*, other films produced by Melfi are *Game of Life*, *Bed & Breakfast: Love is A Happy Accident*, *Going in Style*, *The Black Ghiandola*, *El Camino Christmas*, and *The Starling* (Galloway, Stephen; 2017; <https://www.hollywoodreporter.com/features/hidden-figures-oscar-nominated-director-theodore-melfi-shares-backstory-972806>; accessed October 19<sup>th</sup> 2019).

## CHAPTER III

### LITERARY REVIEW

In analyzing the literary works, the writer will focus on two main elements. There are intrinsic and extrinsic elements. A movie has two kinds of the intrinsic elements; there are narrative and cinematography elements. The intrinsic elements have a role to build and live the story from inside while the extrinsic elements work with relating the circumstances at the time the literary works are created and the issues from the outside.

#### **3.1 Intrinsic Elements**

##### **3.1.1 Narrative Elements**

Narrative elements have a relation with the intrinsic elements itself. Narrative elements are the general concept to build the story from inside. There are some narrative aspects that can be seen from *Hidden Figures* movie.

##### **3.1.1.1 Theme**

Theme is the main ideas of the story. Abrams argues:

Theme is sometimes used interchangeably with “motif” but the term is more usefully applied to a general concept or doctrine, whether implicit or asserted, which an imaginative work is designed to incorporate and make persuasive to a reader (1999:170).

From the explanation, theme is the concept that has a role to guide the characters in the movie say, do, or think of something. There are two kinds of theme. Those are major theme and minor theme. Major theme is the most important idea that

build story in the movie. Meanwhile, minor theme is the idea in the movie which only appears occasionally.

### **3.1.1.2 Character**

Character is a figure that plays the important role in the movie. Abrams explains that:

Characters are the persons represented in a dramatic or narrative work, who are interpreted by the reader as being endowed with particular moral, intellectual, and emotional qualities by inferences from what the persons say and their distinctive ways of saying it –the dialogue- and from what they do –the action. The grounds in the characters’ temperament, desires, and moral nature for their speech and actions are called motivation (1999:33).

Furthermore, Holman argues that a character is divided into two types.

Those are static and dynamic characters.

A static character is one who changes little if at all in the progress of the narrative. Sometimes a static character gives the appearance of changing simply because our picture of him is revealed bit by bit. A dynamic character, on the other hand, is one who is modified by the actions through which he passes and one of the objectives of the work in which he appears is to reveal the consequences of these actions upon him (1960:81).

From the explanation, it can be seen that a character gives the understanding about the storyline to the viewer by seeing how a figure demonstrate the dialogue, action/gesture, and emotion.

### **3.1.1.3 Setting**

Setting is the important element which makes the viewer can feel the atmosphere of the story in the movie. Abrams states that the over all setting of dramatic or narrative work is not only general locale where the story takes a place but also historical time and social circumstances in which the action occurs (1999:284).

Therefore, setting is divided into three types; setting of place, setting of time, and setting of social background.

#### **3.1.1.3.1 Setting of Place**

Setting of place represents where the story in the movie takes place. “The physical setting within which the action of a narrative takes place. It implies geographical and scenic qualities rather than the less tangible of setting.” (Holman, 1960:296)

#### **3.1.1.3.2 Setting of Time**

Setting of time indicates when the story in the movie occurs. According to Barnet, Burto, and Cain, “the setting of the story –not only the physical locale but also the time of the day or the year or the century –may or may not be symbolic” (2008:152). Setting of time relate to such sign like morning, afternoon, evening, night, name of the days, etc. The time also can be seen from fashion or other properties appeared in the movie.

#### **3.1.1.3.3 Setting of Social Background**

According to Holman, setting of social background is the relation between the character and the social circumstances such as spiritual, political, ethic, psychological, and other situation (1960:453).

#### **3.1.1.4 Conflict**

Conflict is a struggle between the characters in the movie which can drives the storyline. Holman explains:

The struggle which grows out of the interplay of the two opposing forces in a plot. It is conflict which provides the elements of interest and suspense in any form of fiction, whether it be a drama, a novel, or a short story. The term conflict not only implies the struggle of a protagonist against someone or something, it also implies the existence of some motivation for

the conflict or some goal to be achieved by it. Conflict is the raw material out of which plot is constructed (1960:119).

Conflict is divided into two kinds of categories. There are internal conflict and external conflict. According to Kellenberg, internal conflict is the struggle between the character and the character's mind, personality, and imagination. This conflict happens when the characters face the difficulties or confusion about something. Meanwhile, external conflict is the struggle between the character and the other thing outside him/her. These can be other characters, environments, or societies.

### **3.1.2 Cinematography Elements**

Cinematography elements are related to the technique of taking a moving picture or action and combining it into a series of images that can deliver the story ideas.

According to Brown, the definition of cinematography term is:

The term *cinematography* is from the Greek roots meaning “writing with motion.” At the heart of it, filmmaking is shooting – but cinematography is more than the mere act of photography. It is the process of taking ideas, words, actions, emotional subtext, tone, and all other forms of nonverbal communication and *rendering them in visual terms*. As we will use the term here, *cinematic technique* is the entire range of methods and techniques that we use to add layers of meaning and subtext to the “context” of the film – the dialog and action (2012:2).

Cinematography elements can be divided into some aspects; namely shots, mise-en-scene and sound aspects.

### **3.1.2.1 Shots**

#### **3.1.2.1.1 Camera Distance**

Camera distance is related to the framing of a figure or an image places in a particular distance. According to Bordwell and Tompson, “In a film, the frame is not simply a neutral border; it imposes a certain vantage point onto the material within the image. In cinema the frame is important because it actively defines the image for us” (2004:252). Camera distance can be divided into an extreme long shot, long shot, medium long shot, medium shot, medium close-up, and extreme close-up.

##### **3.1.2.1.1.1 Extreme Long Shot**

Extreme long shot takes the figure which is far from the camera. It cause the figure or the object looks so small. “A framing in which the scale of the object shown is very small; a building, lanscape, and crowd of people will fill the screen” (Bordwell and Tompson, 2004:502).

##### **3.1.2.1.1.2 Long Shot**

Compare to Extreme long shot, the figure or the object of long shot is more noticeable, yet the background is still dominant. “A framing in which the scale of the object shown is small; a standing human figure would appear nearly the height of the screen” (Bordwell and Tompson, 2004:502).

##### **3.1.2.1.1.3 Medium Long Shot**

Medium long shot is the type of shot filmed which takes the object about the knees up. This shot makes the object about four or five feet high to fill most of the

screen (Bordwell and Thompson, 2004:504). The special term for a medium long shot can be seen from human figures.

#### **3.1.2.1.1.4 Medium Shot**

Medium shot is the type of shot filmed which takes the object above the knees or below the waist. This shot provides viewers to see clear gestures, facial expressions, or the actions of human figures. It can be seen from the human figure shot from the waist up (Bordwell and Thompson, 2004:504).

#### **3.1.2.1.1.5 Medium Close-up**

Medium close-up is the type of shot filmed which takes the human body from head to chest. This shot provides viewers to see the actor emotion clearly rather than the background in a scene. It can be seen from the human figure shot from the chest up (Bordwell and Thompson, 2004:504).

#### **3.1.2.1.1.6 Close-up**

Close-up is the type of shot filmed which only shown the part of an object in a screen to convey a detail figure. This shot has a function to see the expression of the object clearer. The example of close-up can be seen from a person's head which shot from the neck up (Bordwell and Thompson, 2004:504).

#### **3.1.2.1.1.7 Extreme Close-up**

Close-up is the type of shot filmed which take the smallest part of an object such as a nose, eye, lips, etc (Bordwell and Thompson, 2004:502). This shot provides the object in detail.



### **3.1.2.2 Mise-En-Scene**

Mise-en-scene is one of the important aspects in making a film. According to Bordwell and Thompson, the definition of mise-en-scene is:

In the original French, *mise-en-scene* (pronounced “meez-ahn-sen”) means “staging an action” and it was first applied to the practice of directing plays. Film scholars, extending the term to film direction, use the term to signify the director’s control over what appears in the film frame. As you would expect from the term’s theatrical origins, mise-en-scene includes those aspects of film that overlap with the art the theater; setting, lighting, costume, and the behavior of the figures. In controlling the mise-en-scene, the director stages the event of the camera (2004:176).

From the explanation above, mise-en-scene is the aspect of making a film where all the elements placed in front of the camera to be photographed. This aspect is related to the visual element such as setting, lighting, costume, etc.

### **3.1.2.3 Sound**

Sound is one of the important aspects in making a movie. This aspect is expressive value that can enrich the movie. According to Mascelli, sound can be divided into dialogue, music and sound effect (1965:67).

### **3.1.2.4 Dialogue**

Dialogue is conversation between two characters or more. The dialogue can depict social positions and individual special interest. From dialogue the viewers and listeners also can distinguish employment, nationality, and social degree of the characters (Holman, 1960:156).

### **3.1.2.5 Music**

Music is the important in making a film because it can distinct different section in movie (Bordwell and Thompson, 2004:157). Music is the element which delivers number of things in the films; it enriches the atmosphere of the scene in a movie,

it describes the characters feeling, it illustrates the condition of setting in a movie, etc.

#### **3.1.2.5.1 Sound Effects**

Sound effects are the element in making a movie to create a sense emotional involvement of the audience. It delivers the sense of realistic environment from the character's action. "Sound effects are usually central to action sequences, while music can dominate dance scenes, transitional sequences, or emotion-laden moments without dialogue" (Bordwell and Tompson, 2004:352).

### **3.2 Extrinsic Elements**

Despite intrinsic elements, the movie also contains extrinsic elements. The extrinsic elements are the important aspect to be understood which has relation to the movie. This element can be a theory that will support the writer to analyze the movie. The writer chooses racial discrimination, gender discrimination, and Black feminism approach to analyze the movie.

#### **3.2.1 Racial Discrimination**

Generally, discrimination is vicious circle in human life which already existed for years. Before understanding about racial discrimination, we need to know the definition of "race" and "discrimination" itself. According to Sowell, the definition of race is:

The term "race" was once widely used to distinguish the Irish from the English, or German from the Slavs, as well as to distinguish groups more sharply differing in skin color, hair, texture, and the like. In the post-World War II era, the concept of "race" has more often been applied to these latter, more visibly different, categories and "ethnicity" to different groups within the broader Caucasian, Negroid, or Mongoloid groupings (1994:6).

From the explanation above, race is a population of people who has the relationship in the bond of marriage and share common traits. This group of people may have a similar characteristic in physical appearance because they inherited from the same ancestors.

Meanwhile, National Research Council explains the concept of discrimination, “the definition of discrimination is used in many social science fields (e.g., economics, psychology, sociology) to refer to unequal treatment because of race” (2004:40). It demonstrates the minorities under the oppressor power. As consequence, the majority tends to feel the sense of superiority over another and they used to oppress the minority.

According to the Cashmore, racial discrimination take action on group basis; it works on the characteristic attributes of certain groups and differences of that group, not individualized characteristic (2004:345). They judge solely membership of race groups. Besides that, racial discrimination also gives disadvantages to certain group. Some disadvantages that minority gotten from superior group such as differential access to opportunities, incomes, socioeconomic status, etc.

Tyson argues that there are three forms of racism. The first form of racism is institutionalized racism which is a racism supported by society institution, such as the system of education, judicial, entertainment, fashion industries, law enforcement policies, labor practices and housing regulation. The second form of racism is internalized racism which is the confirmed belief passed upon them by American racist that they are inferior to whites, less capable, less worthy, less

intelligent, or less attractive. The last form of racism is intraracial racism which is the discrimination given to fellow Black people. The discrimination within the black community itself against those whose skin are darker, and more African feature, such as the shape of lips and nose or hair texture. This racism is the result of internalized racism (2011:212).

### **3.2.2 Gender Discrimination**

Gender discrimination has related to the patriarchy concept which means, the position of woman is under man. Gender is socially and culturally shaped of behavior given to male and female. Society cannot be separated from gender positioning rules.

Gender is a social construct and varies in different societies and time period. For instance, where the cultures of the world are predominantly patriarchal a few matriarchic cultures can also be found. This difference also explains in itself the concept of gender in that culture and which gender in that culture and which gender has the upper hand on the other in terms of social power control (Mushtaq, 2017).

From the explanation above, patriarchy culture is more dominant than matriarchy in around the world. It means that the position of men is more dominant than women almost in all aspect of life such as social, political, economic activities, etc.

Almost in society culture, man has position as decision maker and woman solely as follower. The superiority of man may order the woman's thought in many fields in life such as in economic and social activities. It will give assumption that woman is a weak creature who just need to take care of her family at home. Merrill and Eldredge explain that men are believed to be naturally

aggressive, dominate, and fitted to handle complex job. In contrast, women are believed as gentle, timid, and unfitted to handle job outside home (1952:162).

The attitudes that make woman has lower position under man are very deeply ingrained in the culture. Even, these attitudes start from family. How parents educate their children will formulate their attitudes and identity. Uzma (2004) states that identity of human built through the society, environment, and parents. Parents usually consider that their daughters are timid and weak. Because of that, they need to be protected by other male members of the society. That assumption will make limitation for women to do everything in social life.

### **3.2.3 Black Feminism**

#### **3.2.3.1 History of Feminism**

In the past, women did not have any kinds of rights like men. Not only having a lot of problems and obstacles to become important members in the society, women are also neglected and mistreated by men. Men are always being superior figures in the society who could drive women as they want. Pogrebin (2013) says, “When men are oppressed it is a tragedy, when women are oppressed it is a tradition.” Those conditions create wishes and dreams for women to change their position in the society not only being a mother, a wife, or a daughter but also they can be normal citizens who have equal rights and duties like men.

But, women face a long trip to fight for feminism. It can be seen from the steps of feminism which are divided into three waves. The history feminism movements pass many activities and they were called ‘the three feminism waves’.

### **3.2.3.1.1 The First Wave**

The First Wave of Feminism started during 19th century until early 20th century. During World War I and World War II women do not have any rights to do anything in public places. Those activities create a stereotype for women who are said that woman is no more than a housekeeper or a mother. Woman is seen as a weak figure among man. This judgment made women's rights activists argued that woman needs to gain the right to vote and work in all fields. That is why the movement in this period focused on suffrage and social rights of women in public places.

Ghorfati and Medini (2015) argue that the result of this movement can be seen when Germany and few other countries such as United States granted women suffrage, social rights, and freedom. White feminists who spoke about freedom in this period are Mary Wollstonecraft, John Stuart Mill, and Harriet Taylor.

This movement is also supported by Black women who joined the movements for Black women or they were calling her colored women. Those Black women who joined this movement are Maria Stewart, Sojourner Truth, and Frances Harper.

### **3.2.3.1.2 The Second Wave**

This movement happened during the late 1960s and early 1970s. The activity in this period is the continuation of the previous one. This wave is well known as radical feminism. Feminists in this period are not only look for the right to be equal in voting and working but also they wanted women to be independent in

everything including her body and her feeling. Therefore, they start to talk about the right for them to marry someone they like without considering her or his sex.

In this period, women act deeper to look for her rights. From asking only for voting, the right to marry, they finally wanted the rights almost in every field of life such as in economical, political, and religious fields.

In economical right, Friedan (1963) explains that she shares about the situation of women who do not have the right in political and social fields. To solve this situation, feminists start to ask the right of women to be paid even when they worked in their own house (housewives). Feminists in this period argue that people should respect doing this job.

#### **3.2.3.1.3 The Third Wave**

The third wave of feminism appeared in the early 1990s and continued to the present. As people know that second wave feminism does not represent the experiences of all women in the world. It just focuses on White and upper-middle class backgrounds. So, the third wave feminism is created to give reaction to the previous one. In this period, feminism tries to develop the movements into racial and cultural identities. These included not only white, but also black, Latina, Native American, and Asian feminist organizations. Davis (1981) also argues, “the third wave emphasis on intersectionality by examining how race and class biases negatively affected the feminist movement.”

This movement also focuses on removing the stereotypical pictures of women by deleting some ideas which is like sexist language that used to describe girls or women.

### **3.2.3.2 Black Feminist Movement**

Although feminism claims that all the activities of movements have the goals to the equality of all women from every race, ethnic, and social belonging, in fact those just represented the rights and experiences of white upper-middle class women. The previous movements of feminists do not give importance to the problems of Black women. Ghorfati and Medini (2015) argue that Patricia Collins who was one of black feminists says that feminists do not bring any rights of Black women at all. They are separated from some activities related feminism which were controlled by White women at that time.

Moreover, Black women were discriminated against sexually and racially. They were racially oppressed in the women's movement and sexually oppressed in the black liberation movement. Therefore, black feminist movement is created.

The purpose of black feminist movement is not only to fight for the right of Black women, but also far from that thing, it has the purpose to develop the theory that can derive the way race, gender, and class are interconnected in their lives and to take action to stop racist, sexist, and classist discrimination. So, the most important thing in this idea is not just asking equal rights with men but also looking for equal right with White women.

In this modern era, Black women need to fight for their right to have equal position in the workplace. Work outside home for Black women is the key to get freedom and liberation. They state that working outside home can break the assumption that women are always dependent to man. Therefore, it will enable Black women to resist sexist domination.



In analyzing the struggle of Black women in workplace in *Hidden Figure*, the writer decides to specify the theory of Black feminism by Patricia Hill Collins. The reason why the writer uses Black feminism theory from Collins is because Collins presents the importance of empowering Black women and building consciousness in facing discrimination in workplace. Collins argues that emphasizing Black women in job fields can develop their contribution to keep their family well. They also can teach their children not only about domestic work but also how to survive in real life (2000:46).

Collins argues that there is stereotype saying that most type of work that can be done by Black women is such a “mule” work. “The case of Black women in domestic service, those Black women working as dishwashers, dry-cleaning assistants, cooks, and health-care assistants, as well as some professional Black women engaged in corporate mammy work” (Collins, 2000:48). From that explanation, it can be seen the reason why Black women are difficult to get the same job opportunities and hard to get promotion in job fields because there is deep rooted stereotype that makes Black women does not have equality as human being especially in workplace.

## **CHAPTER IV DISCUSSION**

### **4.1 Intrinsic Aspects**

Intrinsic aspect that will be analyzed by the writer is narrative and cinematography elements of the movie. In this thesis, the writer will discuss the narrative elements such as theme, character, setting, and conflict. In addition, cinematography elements are used to support the analysis.

#### **4.1.1 Narrative Elements**

##### **4.1.1.1 Theme**

*Hidden Figure* is an American movie which depicts the struggle of African-American women facing double discrimination. Major theme of this movie is the struggle of three African-American women, Dorothy Vaughan, Katherine Johnson, Mary Jackson facing discrimination to achieve American dream. Although they have to face racial discrimination and sexual discrimination, they still want to achieve better lives and equality rights by pursuing their careers and families.

Minor theme of the movie is the conflict between the United States and the Soviet Union during Cold War which gives impact to the plot of story. It is started when the Soviet Union launches Spunik in 1957. Then it triggers the United States, in this case is NASA group to do the same. Another minor theme in this movie is love. This movie depicts some love stories of the characters. The love story between the characters of the movie also creates conflict such as gender

discrimination. Gender discrimination exists in this movie because black men still assume that Black women cannot have equal position among others in all sectors.

#### 4.1.1.2 Character

##### 4.1.1.2.1 Katherine Johnson



Picture 4.1 Katherine looks so serious.  
(00:03:09)



Picture 4.2 Katherine works at NASA.  
(00:10:53)



Picture 4.3 Katherine faces the  
administrator of Space Task Group.  
(00:17:19)



Picture 4.4 Katherine gives advice to  
her daughters. (00:30:59)

Katherine is an African-American woman who was born in White Sulphur Springs, West Virginia in 1918. She is one of major characters in *Hidden Figure*. West Virginia Institute is the best school for Black people in that province. Because of her intelligence, she gets full scholarship when she is young and she has to move there to continue her education.

In picture 4.1, the framing of the figure is medium close-up. Through this shot, the viewer can focus to the facial expression of the character. In that picture, the viewer can see Katherine's make up is like a working woman with eyeglasses on her face that will show her intelligence. Working woman appearance of Katherine is also showed in picture 4.2 which uses long shot to frame the figure. Katherine works in West Computing Group in National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) with the other Black women before finally she is transferred to Space Task Group and works with White people.

Katherine Johnson is a brave, passionate, and outspoken African-American woman. Katherine's courage can be seen from the picture 4.3. The way she faces Ruth bravely, showing that she does not mind to work with White people although she has to get discrimination and intimidation. Katherine is also known as an outspoken black working woman among other White workers. This is showed by the dialogue with Mr. Al Harrison as her coordinator in Space Task Group when she gets angry in telling the discrimination that she got in workplace.

Mr. Harrison: Where the hell have you been? Everywhere I look, you're not where I need you to be. It's not my imagination. Now where the hell do you go every day?

Katherine : To the bathroom, sir.

Mr. Harrison: To the bathroom? To the damn bathroom. For 40 minutes a day? What do you in there? We're T-minus zero here. I put a lot of faith in you.

Katherine : There is no bathroom for me here.

Mr. Harrison: What do you mean there is no bathroom for you here?

Katherine : There is no bathroom. There is no colored bathroom in this building. Or any building outside the West Campus, which is half a way mile away. Did you know that? I have to walk to Timbuktu just to relieve myself. And I can't use one of the handy bikes. Pictures that, Mr. Harrison. My uniform... Skirt below my kness, my heels and a simple string of pearls. Well, I don't own pearls! Lord knows you don't pay

coloreds enough to afford pearls! And I work like a dog, day and night, living off of coffee from a pot. None of you wanna touch! So, excuse me, if I have to go to the restroom a few times a day .

(*Hidden Figures*, 01:01:15-01:02:58)

Katherine is a single mother with three daughters. Katherine's husband has died. From picture 4.4, the viewer can see the interaction between Katherine and her daughters. The reason why she needs to work hard is because she has to be mother and also father for her daughters.

#### 4.1.1.2.2 Mary Jackson



Picture 4.5 Mary asks Glenn for a handshake. (00:39:05)



Picture 4.6 Mary works at NASA. (00:15:28)

Mary is a mathematician who works in West Computing Group West Computing Group in National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA). She is one of Katherine's best friends. She has bright character in *Hidden Figures*. Among other African-American women who work in West Computing group, she is the most confident woman worker. It can be seen from the picture 4.5. In picture 4.5, the framing of the figure is long shot. Through this shot, the viewer can understand the involvement of the figures along with surrounding environment. In that picture, the viewer can see that Mary asks Mr. Glenn confidently to have a handshake. Mr. Glenn is a Marine Corps pilot who will try to orbit with

Friendship 7. Besides asking a handshake, the confidence of Mary Jackson can be seen from the way she introduces herself to Mr. Glenn. As a Black woman, Mary thinks that she has equal right to do anything.



Picture 4.7 Mary argues with her husband. (00:33:59)



Picture 4.8 Mary explains her petition in court. (01:11:47)

Mary is also known as an outspoken woman. Although Mary knows that as a Black woman she has equal right but she knows that the surrounding will not support it. Picture 4.6 shows the scene when Mary being mordant while talking to Mr. Zielinski, her boss about the fact that have to be faced by Black women. The outspoken character of Mary is proven by the dialogue below.

Mr. Zielinski: Mary, a person with engineer's mind should be an engineer. You can't be a computer the rest of your life.

Mary : Mr. Zielinski, I'm a Negro woman. I'm not gonna entertain the impossible.

Mr. Zielinski: and I'm a Polish Jew whose parents died in a Nazi prison camp. Now I'm standing beneath a spaceship that's going to carry astronaut to the stars. I think we can say we are living the impossible. Let me ask you... if you were a white male, would you wish to be an engineer?

Mary : I wouldn't have to. I'd already be the one.

(*Hidden Figures*, 00:15:00-00:15:46)

Mary faces a lot of difficulties to be an engineer because to be engineer is something impossible for Black women. Even she often argues with her husband

when talking about it. Her husband thinks that she never gets a chance to have engineer education because she is a Black woman. But, Mary is an ambitious and hardworking woman. She will do anything to achieve what she wants. In the picture 4.8, Mary is going to court to prove that it will be worth by letting Black woman into an all white school to get education to pursue her dream to become an engineer.

#### 4.1.1.2.3 Dorothy Vaughn



Picture 4.9 Dorothy leads her colleagues. (00:10:34)



Picture 4.10 Dorothy asks to apply for supervisor position in NASA. (00:12:09)

Dorothy is a coordinator of West Computing Group. She works with her friends, Katherine and Mary, and the other African-American women. She is a firm person in deciding and doing anything. The firmness of Dorothy can be seen when she coordinates her colleagues in West Computing group. Here is the dialogue to prove the firmness of Dorothy in workplace.

- Dorothy : All right, Gloria. You'll be with engineering, building four.  
(then, there were three Black women came late when Dorothy gave job division to each workers)
- Dorothy : Ladies, ladies. If you're tardy, you don't get an assignment.if you don't get an assignment, you don't have a job. Eleanor, data reduction, building 202.
- Eleanor : Data reduction?
- Dorothy : You're welcome to join the charmers in Magnetoplasma Dynamics.

Eleanor : Oh, no, ma'am. Thank you. Data reduction is just fine.  
Dorothy : Mmm hmm.  
(*Hidden Figures*, 00:10:28-00:10:51)



Picture 4.11 Dorothy gives advices to her sons. (00:50:29)



Picture 4.12 Dorothy learns how IBM machine works. (0:59:56)

Besides being a firm person in workplace, Dorothy is also a wise and firm figure for her sons. It can be seen from the picture 4.11. In picture 4.11, the framing of the figure is long shot. Through this shot, the viewer can understand the involvement of the figures along with surrounding environment. It can be seen from the picture that Black people have to sit in the back seat of the bus. Then, Dorothy gives her sons advices about the life principles of Black people. Here is the dialogue between Dorothy and her sons.

Dorothy : Separate and equal are two different things. Just 'cause it's the way, doesn't make it right. Understand?  
Son : Yes, mama.  
Dorothy : You act right, you are right. That's for certain. Understand?  
Son : Yes, mama.  
(*Hidden Figures*, 00:50:16-00:50:37)

Dorothy is an ambitious and creative figure. But, being an African-American woman in that period was something that makes everything hard to get. Having a job of a supervisor took a lot of work and effort for Dorothy. She faces a lot of difficulties to become a supervisor. It starts from her boss, Mrs. Mitchell,



who always rejects Dorothy's application to become a supervisor for IBM machine because she is a colored woman. But, Dorothy keeps pushing forward to reach her goals. She starts to learn how to operate the IBM machine by reading a book about it. Then, she tries to fix the IBM machine quietly and does not stop until she is able to operate it correctly. Finally, she can show that she is better than the people which are paid to operate the IBM machine.

### 4.1.1.3 Setting

#### 4.1.1.3.1 Setting of Time



Picture 4.13 Showing time in 1926  
(00:01:42)



Picture 4.14 Showing time in 1961  
(00:03:05)

In picture 4.13, taken by extreme long shot, in 1926 it shows how the condition of Katherine's life when she was young. It more focuses on Katherine's education with the other Black people. Then, in picture 4.14, it shows that Katherine has become an adult one and the properties such as car is more modern than before. The setting of time of the picture 4.14 is in 1961. The Cold War period also happened in that year. The Cold War period in this movie is indicated by the news about Russian launches their Koralb-Sputnik-4 satellite in orbit which turns to be a trigger for the Space Task Group in National Aeronautics and Space

Administration (NASA). NASA wants to launch rockets into space for the first American orbital exploration. This rocket tries to beat Russian in the space race during the World War II.



Picture 4.15 Cold War period  
(00:07:37)



Picture 4.16 Showing day situation  
(00:07:07)



Picture 4.17 Showing night situation  
(00:27:12)



Picture 4.18 Showing night situation  
(00:53:00)

*Hidden Figures* mostly takes day as the background of the time. From the picture 4.15, the viewer can see that the movie shows the day situation because most of the movie scenes taking place in workplace when people do their job there. In picture 4.16 and 4.17, the movie shows night situation such as when Katherine and her friends went to home from working and when black community in that movie enjoy the event together.

#### 4.1.1.3.2 Setting of Place



Picture 4.19 White Sulphur Spring,  
West Virginia  
(00:00:55)



Picture 4.20 Black women workplace  
(00:10:35)



Picture 4.21 White people workplace  
(00:16:44)



Picture 4.22 Colored canteen  
(00:46:38)

The movie is started when Katherine is still young. From picture 4.19 it shows that Katherine lives in White Sulphur Spring, West Virginia before moving to Hampton, Virginia. Then she works in West Computing Group as human computer at the Langley Research Center of NASA with the other African-American women. In that movie, NASA office is located in Hampton, Virginia.



Picture 4.23 Bus  
(00:50:24)



Picture 4.24 Black community  
neighborhood  
(00:33:33)

By using long shot framing, picture 4.20 depicts the condition of Black women workplace in West Computing Group. The interior of that office is simple compared to White people workplace in NASA which is depicted in picture 4.21. The first time Katherine entered the office in Space Task Group in NASA, she feels amazed of the office. That office has better properties than her office before. Besides segregation of workplace between Black people and White people, there is segregation of facilities in workplace such as bathroom facilities and canteen which can be seen from picture 4.22. Moreover, the viewer can see that Black people also get segregation in bus. They have to sit in the back seat of the bus and White people in the front seat.

Picture 4.24, taken by extreme long shot framing, it shows the condition of black community neighborhood. They live near to each other in the residence. They often hold community events such as holiday table right after religious activities in church.

#### 4.1.1.3.3 Setting of Social Background



Picture 4.25 Friendship of Katherine, Mary, and Dorothy. (00:06:28)



Picture 4.26 Black women workers. (01:27:40)



Picture 4.27 Racial segregation in workplace (00:38:00)



Picture 4.28 Intraracial discrimination (00:34:24)

Using medium shot, picture 4.25 focuses on what Katherine, Mary, and Dorothy talking about. The friendship between the three of them is strong. They will strengthen each other when facing a lot of problems in lives especially in workplace. Their friendship becomes their power being outspoken African-American women in facing racial discrimination in workplace. Aside from that, there are other African-American women workers who have the same dreams to fight for her right in getting the right in workplace. Picture 4.26 shows the viewer that Black women work together in one place. Not only working but they also fight for her right in workplace.

Picture 4.27, taken by extreme long shot framing, it shows that at that time, there is racial segregation between white and Black people in workplace. The rules in workplace always discriminate black workers especially Black women workers. The Black women workers do not get good facilities in workplace like White workers get. Black women workers also cannot use White workers facilities such as bathroom, canteen, etc. Aside from getting racial discrimination in workplace, African-American women also get intraracial discrimination in their community even in their family. The intraracial discrimination can be seen from the dialogue between Katherine and Mr. Johnson.

Johnson : Pastor mentioned you're a computer at NASA.  
Katherine : Yes.  
Johnson : What's that entail?  
Katherine : Oh. We calculate the mathematic necessary to enable launch and landing for the space program.  
Johnson : That's pretty heady stuff.  
Katherine : Yes, it is.  
Johnson : They let women handle that sort of... Uh... That's not what I mean  
Katherine : What do you mean?  
Johnson : Uh... I'm just surprised that something so... taxing... Mmm-hmm.  
Katherine : Mr. Johnson, If I were you I'd quit talking right now.  
Johnson : I didn't mean no disrespect.  
Katherine : I will 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 compute over 10.000 calculations by cosine, square root, and lately, analitical 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 country. So, yes. They let women do some things at NASA, Mr. Jackson. And it's not because we wear skirts. It's because we wear glasses. Have a good day.

*(Hidden Figures, 00:36:10-00:37:35)*

#### 4.1.1.4 Conflict

##### 4.1.1.4.1 Internal Conflicts

The characters in this movie face some internal conflicts. The internal conflict is related to the personal problem of the characters. In this movie, the internal conflicts of characters occur because of discrimination that they get from the workplace. The main characters in this movie face the internal conflict when they get inequality treatment in workplace.



Picture 4.29 Katherine told her friends about her difficulties in new workplace. (00:27:54)



Picture 4.30 Dorothy felt injustice. (00:12:46)

Picture 4. 29 uses a medium close up shot to emphasize sadness and disappointment of Katherine's face. It is because Katherine gets the discrimination in the new workplace. Just because she is a Black woman, she gets inequality treatment among White workers. Even she doubts she can keep her job there. It can be proven from the dialogue when Katherine tells her friends about her problems.

Katherine : Truth be told, Dorothy... I don't even know if I can keep up in that room. I'll be back with computers in a week or out of a job entirely.

Dorothy : Oh, please. You're better with the numbers than anyone in there, Katherine. And you know it. Just make that pencil move as fast as your mind does, you'll be fine.

(*Hidden Figures*, 00:27:50-00:28:07)

Same with Katherine, Dorothy also faces the internal conflict in workplace because the discrimination she got in there. Picture 4.30 with medium long shot shows Dorothy holds back her anger and aggravation. She gets inequality treatment from her boss, Mrs. Mitchell. It is because she wants to apply for a supervisor position in NASA but Mrs. Mitchell rejects her request because she is colored woman. Moreover, Mrs. Mitchell does not tell the more reason why colored woman can not apply for being a supervisor.

#### **4.1.1.4.2 External Conflicts**

##### **4.1.1.4.2.1 Conflict between Mary and Her Husband**



Picture 4.31 Mary and her husband argue about equality right.

(00:34:25)

Conflict of the main characters does not only come from themselves but also come from their family, their colleagues, and their social life. Taken by medium close up picture 4.31 shows the emotion of Mary and her husband is dominant than the background of the scene. The viewer can see Mary and her husband argue about something. They argue about equality right for Black people. Mary believes that Black people can get equality right while her husband argues that equality



right is not for Black people. The conflict between Mary and her husband is continued until her husband realizes the struggle of Mary to achieve her dream to become the first Black woman engineer in NASA. Here is the dialogue when Mary and her husband argue about Black people equality right.

Levi : I just don't understand.  
Mary : I don't want to talk about this again, okay?  
Levi : A female engineer? A female engineer? We're Negro, baby. Ain't no such thing. Understand it.  
Mary : It's not like that there, Levi.  
Levi : You can't apply for freedom. Freedom is never granted to the oppressed. It's got to be demanded. Taken.  
Mary : Stop quoting your slogans at me. there is more than one way to achieve something.  
Their son : I dont want any greens.  
Levi : Hey, i tell you about interrupting?  
Mary : Here, try this, baby.  
Levi : You're gonna eat them greens, too. Kids need to eat their vegetables. You'd know that if you was ever home.  
Mary : You better settle down, Levi Jackson. Unless you want this female's mind, right here, in front of everybody.  
Levi : All I'm saying...don't play the fool. I don't wanna see you get hurt. NASA's never ever given you guys your due. Having a couple of extra degrees ain't gonna change that. Civil rights ain't always civil.

*(Hidden Figures, 00:33:35-00:34:37)*

#### **4.1.1.4.2.2 Conflict between Black people and Government**



Picture 4.32 Black people hold a demonstration. (00:49:12)

Picture 4.32 uses a medium close up shot to make the statement in the banner clearly. That banner is the demonstration tool for Black people to express their dream in getting equality right without segregation.

#### **4.1.1.4.2.3 Conflict between Black Woman Worker and Her Boss**



Picture 4.33 Mary is not qualified for engineer position (00:46:46)

Discrimination between white and Black people especially in workplace becomes the main conflict in this movie. It can be seen from the picture 4.33. Black women workers always get difficulties from their boss -White workers- in advancing their job. It happens when Mary Jackson applies for engineer program training. Then, Mrs. Mitchell announces that Mary is not qualified for that program because she just has a couple of degrees, mathematics and physical science which is the same degree as most engineers in NASA. Mrs. Mitchell explains again that NASA requires advanced extension courses through the University of Virginia. The conflict between Mrs. Mitchell and Mary can be seen from the dialogue below.

Mrs. Mitchell : NASA doesn't commission females for the Engineer Training Program.  
Mary : That position is available to any qualified applicant.  
Mrs. Mitchell : Right. Except, you don't have the educational requirements.

- Mary : I have a bachelor's degree in mathematics and physical science. It's the same as most engineers around here.
- Mrs. Mitchell : We now require advanced extension courses through the University of Virginia. It's in the employee handbook. In addendum. In case you haven't read it.
- Mary : Every time we have a chance to get ahead, they move the finish line.
- Mrs. Mitchell : I just follow the rules around here and I expect everyone who works for me to follow them as well. There are no special circumstances for everyone. You all should be thankful you have jobs at all.
- (*Hidden Figures*, 00:46:42-00:47:22)

## **4.2 Extrinsic Aspects**

The writer will analyze the extrinsic aspects of the movie focusing on Black feminism especially in workplace. The writer analyzes the characteristic of Black feminism such as equal right, gender and racial discrimination in workplace according to Patricia Hill Collins' theory.

### **4.2.1 Double Discrimination in Workplace**

Double discrimination which is experienced by African-American women is racial and gender discrimination. The analysis of racial and gender discrimination deal with African-American women workers' experience in facing inequality right and black segregation in workplace. Black women get portion of job in NASA but they get inequality treatment as workers. They also still experience black segregation in workplace. Therefore, in this part the writer will analyze the characteristic of racial discrimination which is depicted in *Hidden Figures* movie.

#### **4.2.1.1 Segregated Facilities in Workplace**

*Hidden Figures* movie takes time during Cold War in the 1960s. As stated before, the second wave of feminism started during the late 1960s and early 1970s

century. In this period, black feminist look for the right to be equal to White people in working aspect. As the viewer can see there are some racial discrimination experienced by African-American women in working place which is depicted in the movie.

Racial segregation is part of racial discrimination. Black women who work in NASA experience some racial segregation in workplace. It can be seen from the facilities that they get in the office. Black women who work in NASA have a separated office which is named as West Computing Group.



Picture 4.34 Front view of NASA office for White people. (00:10:18)



Picture 4.35 Front view of NASA office for Black women. (00:10:23)



Picture 4.36 The interior of NASA office for White people. (00:16:48)



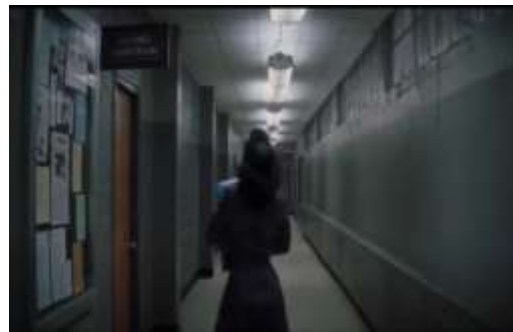
Picture 4.37 The interior of NASA office for Black women. (00:10:32)

Taken by extreme long shot framing, picture 4.34 and picture 4.35 show the comparison between the office building for White people and Black women who work in NASA. It can be seen from picture 4.34 that the office building for

White people looks more exclusive than the office building for Black women. The segregated facility related to the office building also can be seen from the interior of that office. Both picture 4.36 and 4.37 are taken by extreme long shot framing which emphasize the setting of the place. Those pictures show the comparison between the interior of office building for White people and Black woman. Not only the interior but also the work properties in White people's office such as chair, table, lamp, etc look more luxurious that in the Black women's.



Picture 4.38 Katherine looks for a colored toilet. (00:21:55)



Picture 4.39 Colored toilet in West Computing Group office. (00:22:33)

Picture 4.38 and 4.39 depict the segregated toilet experienced by Black woman worker in this case is Katherine in the office. Black women who work in NASA also experience discrimination in getting the same facilities as other workers get. It can be seen from the dialogue between Mrs. Ruth and Katherine when Katherine looks for the ladies' toilet. "May I ask where the ladies' room is?", asked Katherine. Then Ruth answered by saying "Sorry, I have no idea where your bathroom is." (*Hidden Figures*, 00:21:24). From that dialogue it can be conclude that the office has ladies' toilet but the toilet is only for White women and Black women do not allow using that toilet. Because of that reason, every

time Katherine needs to go to the toilet, she has to go to the colored ladies toilet in West Computing Group which is half a mile away from her office.



Picture 4.40 Separated canteen for white and black workers. (00:46:16)



Picture 4.41 Front view of NASA office for Black women. (00:39:27)

Even, the office also separated the canteen for white and black workers.

From the picture 4.40 which is taken by extreme long shot framing, it is clear that there are two rooms for canteen. The front room is for White workers and the side room is for black workers. It also emphasizes by Mary's statement when Mrs. Mitchell enter the colored canteen to announce something to her. Mary said, "Well she must be lost" (*Hidden Figures* 00:46:42).

Moreover, the black worker also gets segregated properties in the office. From picture 4.41 which is taken by long shot framing, it can be seen that the office separates the thermos bottle for white and colored workers. Then, there is no water in the thermos for colored worker. So, the colored worker, in the scene is Katherine needs to fill the water to the thermos by herself.

#### 4.2.1.2 Limited Access for Job Promotion



Picture 4.42 Dorothy is not qualified for supervisor position (00:12:41)

The struggle of African-American women who work in workplace in 1960s or during Cold War focus on inequality of right among workers and struggling for getting job promotion. Collins argues that black men and women workers are more vulnerable than White workers which are being excluded from professional and managerial occupations. If black men have that position, they get higher paying and higher status jobs. While Black women who work in professional and managerial position get lower paying and lower status jobs (2000:65). Black women who work in NASA during Cold War still get job position in each sector of work but they need to struggle for getting job promotion in the workplace.

The struggle of Dorothy to become a supervisor in NASA is a proof that African-American women in that time are difficult to get job promotion. The scene which is depicted in picture 4.42 when Dorothy asks Mrs. Mitchell about the opportunity to become a supervisor because the previous supervisor is sick then the supervisor position in NASA is empty. Although there is no one who fill that position and NASA needs a supervisor, Mrs. Mitchell says that the supervisor position cannot be filled by colored people. Moreover, Mrs. Mitchell gives

statement to Dorothy that it is colored people destiny in NASA. She says that NASA is fast with rocket ships, but slow with advancement for Black people.

Dorothy : Mrs Mitchell. If I could... My application for supervisor, ma'am. Was just wondering if they're still considering me for that position.  
Mrs. Mitchell : Yes. Well, the official word is no. They're not assigning a permanent supervisor for the colored people.  
Dorothy : May I ask why?  
Mrs. Mitchell : I don't know why. I didn't ask why.  
Dorothy : We need a supervisor, ma'am. We haven't had one since Miss Jansen got sick. It's been almost a year.  
Mrs. Mitchell : Things are working just fine as is.  
Dorothy : I'm doing the work of a supervisor.  
Mrs. Mitchell : Well, that's NASA for you. Fast with rocket ship, slow with advancement.  
(*Hidden Figures*, 00:12:02-00:12:47)



Picture 4.43 Mrs. Mitchell rejects Mary's application. (00:46:46)



Picture 4.44 Mary complains about injustice treatment. (00:47:44)

The difficulties to get job advancement are also experienced by Mary Jackson. Mary Jackson is also an African-American woman working at NASA. She wants to be an engineer at NASA. Even, her boss at NASA -Mr. Zielinski- believes that she can be a good engineer because of her intelligent. But, at that time, there is no a woman engineer in NASA. All the engineer position in NASA



is filled by White men. It means, it will be more difficult for Mary Jackson as a Black woman to apply an engineer position in NASA.

Mrs. Mitchell : NASA doesn't commission females for the Engineer Training Program.

Mary : That position is available to any qualified applicant.

Mrs. Mitchell : Right. Except, you don't have the educational requirements.

Mary : I have a bachelor's degree in mathematical and physical science. It's the same as most engineers around here.

Mrs. Mitchell : We now require advanced extension courses through the University of Virginia. It's in the employee handbook. In addendum. In case you haven't read it.

Mary : Every time we have a chance to get ahead, they move the finish line.

Mrs. Mitchell : I just follow the rules around here and I expect everyone who works for me to follow them as well. There are no special circumstances for everyone. You all should be thankful you have jobs at all.

*(Hidden Figures, 00:46:42-00:47:22)*

From the dialogue, it is clear that black American woman workers are difficult to become engineer. NASA seemed not to allow black African-American woman worker to get equality right in term of job position among other workers. Although Mary is required to fill that job position as an engineer, NASA adds the requirement to make her unrequired to fill it. Moreover, the adding requirement is such an impossible requirement that can be fulfilled by Mary as a black African-American woman worker. It can be seen from the scene which is depicted in picture 4.44. Then, from the dialogue below, it is clear that NASA purposively adds the requirement to make African-American woman worker who wants to be an engineer will lose the opportunity to get that position.

Mary : "For those who cannot attend classes at the University of Virginia advanced extension courses are available at the Hampton School." (read NASA requirement).

Katherine : That's still a segregated school, Mary.  
Mary : Virginia acts like Brown versus Board of Education never happened. They are never gonna allow a colored woman to just take classes at an all-white school.  
(*Hidden Figures*, 00:47:28-00:47:48)

#### 4.2.1.3 Institutional Gender Discrimination in Workplace

Working as the part of NASA worker is something prestigious for Katherine, Dorothy, and Mary at that time when most of African-American women are still trapped to work as maid or other domestic job because of blue collar job stigma. But, Katherine, Dorothy, Mary, and other African-American women workers can prove that they can get job as other people because of their intelligent. However, they still experience gender discrimination in workplace.



Picture 4.45 Katherine is prohibited to attend the briefing. (01:20:10)



Picture 4.46 Mr. Paul orders Katherine to delete her name. (01:21:10)

Although NASA is a professional field for workers but during Cold War this workplace still commits gender discrimination. Gender discrimination which is committed by white-male workers to Black women workers can be clearly detected in this movie. Gender discrimination is the result of the perception which is said that the inferiority of African-American women is common issue in

society. Therefore, African-American women workers are difficult to get the same opportunity as white male workers.

Katherine who works as the first African-American woman in Space Task Group which is the workers at that division are all white male needs to face gender discrimination from her colleagues. Katherine often gets inequality opportunity as a worker at that division because she is a Black woman. Picture 4.45 is depicted the inequality opportunity which is gotten by Katherine can hamper her job in that division. It can be seen from the dialogue between Katherine and Mr. Paul when she is prohibited to attend the important meeting because she is a woman.

Katherine : Sir, the parameters for Friendship 7.

Mr. Paul : Oh, I think this is all moot. We are altering the window on the capsule.

Katherine : When did this happen?

Mr. Paul : Six minutes ago. The math is changing. Start over.

Katherine : Sir, if I could attend the briefings, I could stay current...

Mr. Paul : Katherine! We have been through this. It is not possible. There is no protocol for woman attending.

Katherine : There's no protocol for a man circling the earth either, Sir.

Mr. Paul : Okay. That is just the way things are.

*(Hidden Figures, 01:20:04-01:20:28)*

Moreover, Katherine cannot write her name in her calculation which will be presented in the meeting by Mr. Paul. As a replacement, there is Mr. Paul name in that calculation paper as the author of it. It is depicted from the picture 4.46 and the dialogue below.

Mr. Paul : I have told you this. Computer doesn't author reports. Fix it.

Katherine : Those are my calculation. My name should be on it.

Mr. Paul : That is not the way this works.

Mr. Harrison : Paul, what's happening here?

Katherine : Mr. Harrison, I would like to attend today's briefing.

Mr. Harrison: And why is that?

Katherine : Sir, the data changes so fast. The capsule changes. The weight and the landing zones are all changing, every day. I do my work, you attend these briefings, I have to start over. Colonel Glenn launches in a few weeks. We don't have the math figured out yet.

Mr. Harrison: Why is it she can't attend?

Mr. Paul : Because she doesn't have clearance, Al.

Katherine : I cannot do my work effectively if I do not have all the data and all the information as soon as it's available. I need to be in that room, hearing what you hear.

Mr. Paul : Pentagon briefings is not for civilians. It requires the highest clearance.

Katherine : I feel like I'm the best person to present mt calculations....

Mr. Harrison: You're not gonna let this go, are you?

Katherine : No, I'm not.

Mr. Paul : And she is a woman. There is no protocol for a woman attending these meetings.

Mr. Harrison: Okay, I get that part, Paul.

*(Hidden Figures, 01:21:28-01:21:52)*



Picture 4.47 The first day of Mary attends the class. (01:31:14)

Mary Jackson should take advance extension courses at Hampton School as the requirement to become an engineer in NASA. The requirement from NASA discriminates a Black woman worker because Hampton School is only for White male students. They never allow a Black woman to take classes in all white male school. But, finally she gets court license to study in Hampton School. Although she could study at Hampton School, she still gets gender discrimination from her lecturer in the first day of her study.

Mary : (Enter the class)  
Lecturer : Yes?  
Mary : I'm Mary Jackson. I'm enrolled.  
Lecturer : Well, the curriculum is not designed for teaching a woman.  
Mary : I imagine it's the same as teaching a man. I don't see any colored section. Should I take any seat?  
(*Hidden Figures*, 01:31:09-01:31:24)

## 4.2.2 Black Women's Struggle in Facing Double Discrimination

### 4.2.2.1 Ignoring Double Discrimination

Getting job advancement is something difficult for African-American worker. It is also felt by Dorothy Vaughn. Although NASA needs a supervisor in one of work divisions and Dorothy is capable for that position, NASA will not be required her as a supervisor because she is a Black woman. Even though this is considered as racial discrimination, Black woman workers cannot do anything because it is such a protocol in workplace that black worker is slow in advancement in the work.



Picture 4.48 Dorothy is surrender.  
(01:20:10)



Picture 4.49 Katherine has to run to colored toilet. (01:21:10)

The passive resistance in responding racial discrimination in workplace can be seen when Dorothy Vaughn asks for a supervisor position to Mrs. Mitchell. Then, Mrs. Mitchell answered that she cannot apply for that position because she is a Black woman. Although Dorothy feels disappointed because of that discrimination, she cannot do anything and just accepts that condition. Picture

4.48 using medium long shot as camera distance, this scene shows the disappointment response from Dorothy Vaughn.

Dorothy : Mrs Mitchell. If I could, my application for supervisor, ma'am. I was just wondering if they're still considering me for that position.

Mrs. Mitchell : Yes. Well, the official word is no. They're not assigning a permanent supervisor for the colored people.

Dorothy : May I ask why?

Mrs. Mitchell : I don't know why. I didn't ask why.

Dorothy : We need a supervisor, ma'am. We haven't had one since Miss Jansen got sick. It's been almost a year.

Mrs. Mitchell : Things are working just fine as is.

Dorothy : I'm doing the work of a supervisor.

Mrs. Mitchell : Well, that's NASA for you. Fast with rocket ship, slow with advancement.

*(Hidden Figures, 00:12:02-00:12:47)*

Getting the inequality facilities among other workers is also something usual for black workers. Even, black workers get segregated facilities almost in every aspect in workplace such as office building, toilet, canteen, etc. African-American workers have to use colored toilet and colored canteen because of the rule in the workplace. They cannot use white facilities at all. It will hamper their work if black worker needs to go to colored toilet which is placed in different office building because not every office building in NASA provides colored toilet.

Although Katherine is a figure who will speak up if she gets discrimination but in some cases she will choose to do passive resistance in responding discrimination in workplace. She will choose to follow the rule in NASA by ignoring the segregation without feeling burdened on it. Picture 4.48 shows Katherine is in a hurry to look for a colored toilet in one of office buildings in NASA. But the Space Task Group office where she works does not provide a colored toilet, she needs to run to the West Computing Group office which

provides the toilet for her. In fact, the distance between the West Computing Group and the Space Task Group office is half a mile away. It is proven by the statement of Katherine to Mr. Harrison, “There is no bathroom. There are no colored bathrooms in this building or any building outside the West Campus, which is half a mile away” (*Hidden Figures*, 01:01:47-01:01:56).



Picture 4.50 Katherine gets inequality treatment in workplace (01:31:14)

Although Katherine experiences the discrimination obviously in NASA, she prefers to focus on her job. She holds back her emotion as much as possible in facing the discrimination in workplace. Picture 4.50 uses medium long shot as camera distance shows Katherine experiences the segregated work properties, in this case is thermos and coffee for White workers and colored workers. Even more, the water in the colored thermos is empty. It means Katherine needs to fill the water for herself. Even though it is irritating her, she keeps doing it and gets back to focus again to her work.

#### **4.2.2.2 Fighting to Get Equality Right**

African-American women are difficult to advance their career in NASA. Moreover, there is a job stratum that the engineers should be a man worker. This stratum makes women workers especially African-American women get

inequality treatment in workplace. NASA will hamper African-American women in advancing their career.



Picture 4.51 Mary speaks up about injustice requirement. (01:20:10)



Picture 4.52 Mary fights for her right to become an engineer. (01:21:10)

From the picture 4.51, it shows that Mrs. Mitchell tells Mary that NASA refuses her application to be an engineer. Although she is capable and qualified to apply the engineer position but NASA changes the specification. The change is made to thwart Mary to become an engineer in NASA. Mary does not stay silent in facing this unequal treatment. She struggles against the job stratum by proving everyone that she can be an engineer.

NASA adds educational requirements for the worker who wants to be an engineer should take advanced extension courses through the University of Virginia or the Hampton School. Automatically, this requirement makes Mary who is African-American woman worker feels difficult to apply the engineer position because both universities are segregated ones which is not allowed a colored woman to just take classes at an all-white school. To attend advanced extension courses in one of both universities, Mary sends her petition to court. In front of the judge, she speaks up to fight for her right as a worker to become an engineer in NASA. It can be seen from the dialogue between Mary and the judge.



Court clerk : Mary Jackson. Petition to attend courses at Hampton High School.

Mary : Good morning, Your Honor.

Judge : Hampton High School is a white school, Mrs. Jackson.

Mary : Yes, Your Honor. I'm aware of that. Virginia, still a segregated state. Regardless of what the federal government says, regardless of what the Supreme Court says, our law is the law.

Mary : Your Honor, if I may. I believe that there are special circumstances to be considered.

Judge : What would warrant a colored woman attending a white school?

Mary : May I approach your bench, sir? (then, Mary is allowed to approach judge's bench) Your Honor, you of all people should understand the importance of being first.

Judge : How's that Mrs. Jackson?

Mary : You were the first in your family to serve in the Armed Forces U.S. Navy. The first to attend university. George Mason. And the first state judge to be recommissioned by three consecutive governors.

Judge : You've done some research.

Mary : Yes, sir.

Judge : What's the point?

Mary : The point is Your Honor, no Negro woman in the state of Virginia have ever attended an all-white high school. It's unheard of.

Judge : Yeah, unheard of.

Mary : And before Alan Shepard sat on top of a rocket, no other American had ever touched space. And now, he will forever be remembered as the U.S. Navy man from New Hampshire, the first to touch the stars. And I sir, I plan on being an engineer at NASA, but I can't do that without taking them classes at that all-white school. And I can't change the color of my skin. So I have no choice but to be the first. Which I can't do that without you, sir. Your Honor, out of all the cases you're gonna hear today, which one is gonna matter 100 years from now? Which one is gonna make you the first?

Judge : Only the night classes, Mrs. Jackson.

*(Hidden Figures, 01:10:40-01:13:10)*

From the dialogue, it can be seen that Mary totally gives efforts to fight for

her right to attend the Hampton High School which is being the advanced

extension courses place for engineer requirements at NASA. Mary has done some research about the judge to convince him that African-American women also have a right to get the same education as White people.



Picture 4.53 Katherine speaks up about discrimination. (01:20:10)



Picture 4.54 Mr. Harrison abolished segregated sign. (01:21:10)

Besides Mary, Katherine also finally speaks up the discrimination in workplace which is experienced by her. After being silent and ignoring all the unequal treatment at the beginning of her work in Space Task Group, Katherine vents her anger to her boss, Mr. Harrison. She tells discrimination in workplace which is hampered her work such as there is no colored bathroom in Space Task Group building and she has to run to West Computing Group building for a colored toilet. Then, the segregated coffee pot for her in the workplace which is no one will touch it. After speaking up all the discrimination that she gets in workplace, Katherine says sorry to Mr. Harrison then she asks Mr. Harrison's permission to get out from workroom.

Hearing all the discrimination experienced by Katherine in the workplace which he does not know before, Mr. Harrison does not stay silent. The first thing which is done by Mr. Harrison is he takes off the colored sign in coffee pot. Then, from the picture 4.53, it shows that he abolishes the colored sign in the restroom

in West Computing Group. After abolishing it, he says to everyone around him, “There you have it. No more colored restrooms. No more white restrooms. Just plain old toilets. Go wherever you damn well please.” (*Hidden Figures*, 01:03:58-01:04:13). Mr. Harrison’s statement means that there is no segregated facility between white and black workers. All the facilities are for all the workers. Black workers must get equal facilities as White workers get.

## CHAPTER V

### CONCLUSION

The double discrimination experienced by African-American women in workplace which is depicted in *Hidden Figures* can be seen from limited access for job promotion, limited appreciation in job field, the segregated facilities such as segregated office building, segregated restrooms, segregated canteen, segregated coffee pot, etc. The discrimination creates manifestation of Black women empowerment to face and fight the inequality right that they get in workplace.

Each character of African-American women in *Hidden Figures* movie has their own way to face and fight the discrimination in workplace. Ignoring the discrimination will be chosen by African-American women if they still realize that the opportunities to work in NASA is more precious instead of making an issue of that discrimination itself. They will keep positive mindset toward that discrimination and focus again on what they work. But, they also will fight against the discrimination if it very hampers their work. Katherine, Dorothy, and Mary will speak up to fight for the equality right that they have to get as workers. The struggle of African-American women to fight for the equality right will create solidarity among Black women in making a better situation toward discrimination in workplace.

Black women empowerment is the main issue in this movie. In 1960s although Black women have opportunities to work in field, they have to suffer

more than the other workers because they face double discrimination. Moreover there are some protocols in the workplace which often discriminates them as workers. Empowering and raising the consciousness among Black women is the best way to change or make better the discriminatory rules in workplace. The Black women characters in this movie will prove that although they are Black women, they have the same capability as other workers which make them to deserve the equal right among others.

Katherine, Dorothy, and Mary are the real great figures who give a proof that African-American women have professionalism and capability as White workers. Their position becomes the important ones in NASA behind the success of NASA in sending the human to space for the first time. All the experiences of African-American women characters of the movie prove that although they cannot change the color of their skin to be white and they get discrimination in all aspect of their work, they still can achieve their dream by a strong willingness and hardwork.

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