

Higher learning reaction paper

[Education](#), [Learning](#)



The film “ Higher Learning” portrays the many prejudices and race issues that existed in America around 1995, when the movie premiered. The movie takes place at Columbus University, which serves as a fictional university undergoing the transition of America being a more diverse, free nation. From the time when America began its struggle with race and culture boundaries, people of the United States have shown their true beliefs towards other people who may look differently than they do; and the movie “ Higher Learning” is a good example of the type of prejudices.

Before the movie even starts, the title of the movie already promotes a message that lies in the title, “ Higher Learning. ” The title may suggest that, not only are students attending a university to gain more knowledge needed for the career they choose to pursue, but rather, obtain greater knowledge about life and living freely amongst one another without having race or culture boundaries. Students that are entering college are about to embark on a journey that will prepare them for real life adulthood.

The title “ Higher Learning” implies that being enrolled in college is not only for your academic development but also your social evolution. At the current time in the movie, when there were many race and culture boundaries that created conflict between people of different backgrounds; students, especially minorities, were being tested for real life situations by entering college. The way Singleton implements group of students of the same background around campus symbolizes the cultural divide between many different ethnic groups.

The racial-ethnic groups that were all the minorities on campus were always seen together and rarely separated. Throughout the movie, many groups of students from different ethnic backgrounds often experienced altercations with each other. Two of the main groups that clashed throughout the movie were the African American students; some of whom involved themselves in the Black Panther organization, and the white supremacist group who recruited Remy from the university. Throughout the film we notice the extreme change of two students, Malik and Remy. Malik who is a gifted track athlete, attending the school on a scholarship, is a African American freshman whose views of different race and cultures are mature, whereas his attitude towards himself being a black track star are immature. We do not see him stereotype other students in the very beginning of the movie; however, we do notice that other students who were not African American acted differently toward Malik and they showed fear and also hatred towards him. One person who builds hatred toward Malik is Remy. Remy is a white freshman student who is enrolled in the university and is not involved in anything. Remy is placed with an African American roommate and in the beginning of the movie.

Remy quickly develops hatred towards the perceived ignorance of his roommates and his friends. Remy then distances himself from his own room and falls into the arms of a group of white supremacist who would like to have him join the group. Shortly, Remy is brainwashed into the group's ideology that the group of white males promotes. The group of white supremacist displays their ethnocentrism of white people. Malik and Remy are caught in altercations throughout the movie, in which Singleton uses to

cause rising action towards a climax that ultimately causes the belief that students have to change.

Also, Malik, being involved in these situations, develops some frustration towards the beliefs and acts of Remy and the white supremacist. I believe that Singleton uses these rising actions as a symbol of the way that our environment can influence us and can sway our thoughts on issues. For example, Remy is vulnerable when he becomes an outcast after being known for saying things out of the ordinary. However, he is approached by skinheads that mold him into their group beliefs and values.

At first Remy is uncertain when he witnesses his new friends beating up people on Halloween but he is reassured by Scott, who is the noticeable leader of the group, that what they are doing is good and making society cleaner. From there on Remy grows into a skinhead himself that has determination to get rid of the minorities. Malik also undergoes a similar change, where he develops into an individual who shows hate towards white people. Malik also begins to stereotype and he exemplifies this when we notice him dodging his close friend who is his roommate and even tells him that they can't be seen together.

Singleton's also portrays the different cultures that each group shares. As a group, members enjoy practicing their culture and enjoying the freedom that they have to follow through with their practices. For example, the African American students enjoy listening to their rap, hip-hop, and R & B, and when they play their music in front of people from a different background, more

importantly, the white skinheads; they scold the African American students and seek to get rid of them.

I believe that Singleton uses this act of other cultures displaying their values to symbolize that America is a free nation where everyone is free to their own beliefs and values; however, many prejudices exist and many people have trouble accepting a more diverse society. Over time, America has come a long way from when segregation of minorities was protested. Being a minority is more accepted in today's society. Also, even in younger generations, I am beginning to notice that, now, we do not see the color of a persons skin at first.

Stereotypes still exist, and it seems almost common nature for one to stereotype a person, but in today's society, these concepts are more thought about and held back in respect for one another. As a college student, I do not walk around campus and see only groups that consist of only one type of race. When I see groups of people, many of them are more diverse than ever. You can still notice that many of the different races still cling together almost by instinct, however even sometimes these groups interact with each other and are more socially accepting of one another.

The racial divide no longer seems to exist as much as it did from the movie. There still are some people out there that still practice ethnocentrism; however, in today's society, these people are now mostly looked down upon and can be considered a minority group. The race and culture barriers that once caused so much devastating acts of violence and treatment against people of a different background no longer litter the streets of everyday

activity. The few people that still have negative beliefs of people of a different race are now sunken into the background of society.

Many of the negative words are now kept inside and are often kept unsaid. These words often remain unsaid mainly because in today's society people who promote prejudices against different races are more than often looked down upon. In addition, certain words now have different meanings, some completely opposite of what they meant in 1995. The way people communicate with people of a different race has changed greatly. There may be preconceived stereotypes that people still carry with them due, mainly in part, to the environment one grew up in.

However, people have learned to respect one another and issues with communicating with people of a different race have become more at ease, rather than being hostile. In some ways, however, there are some similarities that exist between the time frame of the movie, and present-day. People in today's society still stereotype one another. The stereotypical thought is often the first thought that comes across our mind when we see a person of a different race. Over time, though, stereotypes have been slowly diminishing in society.

Some other similarities are the groups of people. Although the way that students group with each other is not based so much on race anymore; larger organizations still exist in today's society. One example of an organization is the Ku Klux Klan. Also known as the KKK, the Ku Klux Klan is a group that consists of only people from the white race. Their main purpose is to reinforce their belief that the white race is more superior to any other

racism. Other groups also exist in today's society that practice the values that they believe.

However, these groups are not so much outgoing anymore and the acts of violence that the groups committed in the past are rarely seen in present day. There were many points throughout the movie where a scene occurred that caused viewers to realize something. For example, in the scene where Malik is in a conversation with Fudge, Fudge explains to Malik that all the students of the same race only interact with each other and are rarely seen with students of a different race. After Malik is told this, at that point in the scene, Malik's face turns stern and the music becomes more dramatic.

I believe it is at that time where Malik realized the social barriers that existed on campus and also around the world. Another scene that came to be very important to me is when Remy is seen in the first step of him becoming part of the white supremacist group. In the scene Remy is seen studying outside on some stairs shortly after leaving his room due to his African American roommates playing loud music. At the time Remy is vulnerable and is in need of company. The leader of the skinheads happens to approach Remy in this time of need and Remy is convinced into following Scott, the leader of the skinheads.

These two scenes in the movie are two of the few scenes that stand out the most to me. These scenes stand out the most to me from other ones because these are two points in the movie where the way the two students perceive people of a different race begin to be altered by their environment. I believe that Singleton incorporated these scenes and the way the two

characters develop in order to symbolize the change in society by whom we may encounter in life and how that can impact our beliefs.

Another scene that I believe is significant is at the beginning of the movie when Malik enters an elevator after a white student, Kristen, is standing in the elevator about to go up. During this brief scene in the elevator, after Malik get in the elevator, Kristen clinches her purse more tightly and her facial expression shows fear for Malik. This scene shows that at the time of the movie how people reacted towards one another. It is also a brief time where you can notice that Malik only shakes his head when he sees how people react towards him.

I enjoyed the movie very much. The movie pointed out the harsh reality of the way society was in 1995, especially on a diverse college campus. The move portrayed many acts of violence that may have occurred in real life and it helps to raise our attention and realize how ignorant people acted toward each other. After watching the movie I hope that people who discriminate against other races and cultures can change the way they think. The movie made me feel grateful, as well, for the people who went through this hard time in America and got through it in a righteous manner.

After watching the movie, I became more aware of what the current time era presented to people. And that was ignorance, violence, prejudices, and discrimination towards people who looked differently than that of one's self. I have much respect for the people who had to go through so much trouble just because they were different. I also enjoyed the movie because

Singleton incorporated scenes that may seem out of the ordinary in today's society, but is what really happened during the days of America segregating.

The movie "Higher Learning" is directly related to our Sociology course, in that the film's main theme is racism, and other sociological issues that existed in 1995. In our sociology class, we learn about the reasons why humans interact with each other in the way that they do. In the movie "Higher Learning" many issues arise such as racism and discrimination, as well as, prejudices and barriers. In our sociology course, we learn about these issues and other sociological concepts so that we understand the way society interacts.