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A Chorus Line Final Essay

A Chorus Line reflects the crisis of unemployment in 1975. The successful Broadway musical exposes the problem of societal standards when seeking employment. In ACL as in life, even today, systemic racism, over-sexualization of women, gay+LGBTQ rights + freedom keeps them marginalized + unable to achieve the American Dream

Auditions in the 1970's were a big part of the musical, and movie making business, matter of fact it still is. But even getting to the audition can be almost impossible to achieve. In an article from the 1970s called "Counting the Employed, Not the Unemployed" claims that in back in the 1970s the employment rate in percentage was equal to 36.9%, meaning that the rest of the population were either unemployed, waitlisted for a job or homeless. In "a chorus line" we see about 200 performers trying out to be in an upcoming musical. This part of the movie reflects

the real ongoing crisis on unemployment. Further in to 1975 musicals started to emerge, one of them being “A Chorus line”. Which became pretty famous in the entertainment business. New job opportunities were open for a roles which resulted in a surplus of people applying for a role like we see in a chorus line. The article “**Dance Makes The Musicals Go 'Round: Dance Makes Musicals Go 'Round**” Addresses the event of musicals emerging out of nowhere opening and giving jobs to the people in desperate need of a job in order to survive. It was the perfect opportunity the struggling have of the city needed to pick themselves back up. Unfortunately for some performers the job openings were limited to a certain amount, approximately about 200 people were in a room auditioning for job openings of 54 to 30 jobs openings. Based on those numbers we can get a brief idea of the struggling half of the city. The song “**I hope I get it**” in “A Chorus line” gives a brief display of the performer's envy to get part in the musical and also showing how the performer's are in desperate need of a job. Another song that showed that performers in a chorus were in desperate need of a job was the song called “**LET ME DANCE FOR YOU**” in which Cassie sang to zach in order to convince him to let her audition for a role on the upcoming play. She was also in desperate need of a job and she felt the need to sing to zach because zach was not going to let her audition because her skill level compare to the other performers was just too high. In an academic journal called “**Holtcamp, About Face**” the problem of unemployment is also being addressed but by also surrounding Gender issues. You see back in the 1970s it was rare for women to get jobs because they were supposed to look a certain way in order to get a job. The article centers itself in korea where

plastic surgery is known to be a very popular business. The plastic surgery business in Korea used the population's insecurities to lure them in. They say things "if you don't get plastic surgery, you're friends will and you will be left out when your friends get promotions". This quote from the academic journal "**Holtcamp, about face**" basically this quote brings down pedestrians' self esteem and encourages them to do plastic surgery in order to reach their social expectations, expectations like getting a job and more. This circled more around women than men because women were supposed and expected to look a certain way in order to get a job or anything else, that the social expectations for women back in the 1970s and probably still now. In a chorus line, one performer addressed that issue and talked about how hard it is for her or any woman to get a job without looking or acting a certain way. In "A Chorus Line" Val sings a song called "**Dance Ten Looks Three**" that explains her struggles in the real world. She explains how her skills and talent won't get her anywhere unless she was attractive and in order to be attractive, she had to go do plastic surgery. And of course after her surgery she was able to get some type of job.

Unemployment rates also connect it self around another social problem called Racism. Racism can relate to unemployment rate simply by stating that immigrants in the 1970s were discriminated when it came to getting a job. Some of them were automatically waitlisted or automatically not even given consideration for an interview. In "**Holtcamp, Part B**" It talks about how the very first original version of the musical "A Chorus Line" had only white

performers starring in it, it had no type of diversity. This relates to the problem of immigrants not getting jobs, which means that immigrants were not given a chance to try out for a part back when the original musical was being made. The 1970s was a tough period for anyone living during that time, but it can be said that the stress and unfairness was doubled on the people of color because in order to survive, you need a job, and getting a job was almost impossible for people of color. And in the new version made in the year 1975 the director had a lot more diversity in race and sexuality than the original version. The 1975 version had a black man two hispanics, and two gay guys. The diversity actually was what made the musical a lot more interesting than the original. In the end Zach made all of his performers look the same in the song to make a point saying that they are all the same in the song "One". Throughout the musical, there is a strong irony regarding the identity of the dancers in the chorus line. In the beginning, each dancer was encouraged by Zach to emerge as an individual with emotional context given through respective backgrounds. However, during the finale, the dancers emerged as an anonymous line of dancers and their identities were masked behind their ostentatious costumes. Paradoxically. The 1970s were not only tough on women and people of color, it was also harsh on Gay people. So many events occurred during this time that dealt with the homosexual lifestyle. June 28, 1969 marks the day of the Stonewall riots in which gay people protested against police forces with words and with

violence, simply for equal treatment. A lot of people got injured and died fighting for what they believed was justice. The seventies marked a decade where the musical theatre came to embrace all-star talents like Paul and Gred in “A Chorus Line” with open arms. In fact musicals like, “Lovers: A musical that proves it’s no longer sad to be Gay” , “Let My People Come” and “Fascination” were all musicals based on the relationships of gay lovers. “A chorus Line” was significant because rather than fight and disapprove the idea of gay men, Michael Bennett supported it and gave the two gay men performers in the musical no greater or lesser of an opportunity to get a role on the musical to complete their social expectations. The article

“Remember Stonewall! But How?: Gay Groups Clash Over Commemoration of a Riot in 1969 Remember Stonewall Riot! But How?” Talk about the Stonewall Riot and how

surprising it was and how some aspects were really amazing. Aspects like how dedicated the people were to where they were willing to fight the police force in order to defend what they knew as justice. One Article considered as a naysayer to my main idea would be the article

“STEADY EMPLOYMENT GROWTH FORESEEN BY JOB EXPERTS: STEADY EMPLOYMENT GROWTH FORESEEN BY JOB EXPERTS STEADY EMPLOYMENT GROWTH FORESEEN BY JOB EXPERTS” The article claims that in the 1970s, there were

a lot of open jobs in the medical field for “everybody” and that the unemployment percentage went down. I’m going to disagree with the fact that jobs were open for everybody because people of color, women and homosexuals were discriminated and were never put in

consideration for those jobs, no matter what the education level was and instead of saying that the unemployment rate went down, it will be better to say that the unemployment rate for whites in america went down because the oppression towards the colored, the women, and the homosexuals, did not stop to bring them down even when jobs were open for them.

In conclusion the Broadway musical reflected on the harsh and unfair lives of the people of color, homosexuals, and women in the 1970s. And they had to deal with the unfairness because of their goal of reaching and achieving their own individual social expectations. And getting their American Dream.

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