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Thesis: Age discrimination against women in Hollywood causes older women to become irrelevant in America.

Body Paragraph #3

Hollywood ageism promotes ageism in hiring practices in companies throughout the country, leading women to have a lack of opportunity to work. There is blatant age discrimination in Hollywood, not only in hiring actors, but also writers. In the documentary *Ageism in Hollywood*, interviews reveal that even the most experienced “old” writers are rejected due to a belief that they are unable to connect with a young audience. For example, “67 year old [writer] John McGreevy has won multiple Emmy’s but he’s been told that he’s too old to be hip” (Shaw). This is not the only case of ageism against previously successful writers, as many writers for the show *I Love Lucy* have claimed that they have experienced ageism in recent years (Shaw). Michael Russnow of an Age Discrimination committee poses the question: “how is it coincidentally that we have people that did have such great success 10 years ago, 5 years ago, 15 years ago. Other than age discrimination what other reason not to hire them if they are ready and willing?” Hollywood clearly extends its ageism past the onscreen talent, which suggests that the practice is about more than just providing the public with what casting directors think that they want. It is another way of limiting those who work, and make significant contributions to this business, to those who are young. The reasoning that these people are more

qualified to know what this age group wants, and that this is more important than experience and skills at the job, is indicative of the idealization of this group of people. Their good qualities are seen as sufficient to exceed the benefits of those more qualified and experienced. Thus, when young people of this age group continue to be hired exclusively, the older writers, even the most successful, are unable to do their work and make a difference in the business. It is a problem that has progressed past the volatile acting business to create a deeper problem in Hollywood.

In fact, this issue of ageism does not end in Hollywood, but extends to other businesses in the country. A report by the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) with information from the Bureau of Labor Statistics reveals that “64% of workers say that they have seen or experienced age discrimination in the workplace”, even though there is a law, the Age Discrimination in Employment Act (ADEA), prohibiting workplace discrimination against people 40 or older (AARP). The fact of this age discrimination makes it difficult for people to achieve what they want to. As described by Helene Moglen in her scholarly journal, “women seek to claim identities outside the bounds of families. But, as women find, there is no world elsewhere. In the workplace, failure confirms misogynistic expectations while success is likely to arouse envy, competition, and resentment. All yield finally to the painful denigrations of ageism, which equalizes achievement and deficiency” (Moglen 324). Women in the workforce have the expectation of failure, promoted by the misogynistic, ageist culture. Therefore, their young counterparts feel resentment when the women succeed, because they feel superior. These strong expectations are felt and internalized by the women who receive them. This in turn makes it difficult to complete work effectively, for those of them who are able to be hired while these stereotypes persist.

The atmosphere of dismissal and animosity distracts from work and may lead to active interference and sabotage. A satirical video series by Drew Barrington strengthens this point. The main character, a young male employee at a company, hears about a new recruit who is a slightly older woman, at around age 50. Before she arrives, he complains to his boss that she will be slow to catch on, in a manner that demonstrates his cockiness. He does a rap about age: “You’re 44, there’s the door, you’re 45, barely alive, you’re 46, time to call it quits, 47.” Then, she arrives and does a good job, revealing a calm demeanor and knowledge of that exceeds that of the main character (Barrington). The satirical nature of the video demonstrates that its creator realizes that ageism in the workplace is a serious problem, that is based on unfounded stereotypes. However, the comments in the video represent true opinions that exist in the population. The belief that women in their 40s are no longer viable employees affects the actions of those surrounding them, so women have no escape from the judgment and disapproval for their act of growing older. The video’s counterexample clarifies that the stereotypes are the interfering factor against productivity, not the workers. While ageism may seem more pronounced in some industries than others, it is a societal practice based on the stereotypes people learn through media that persists throughout the workforce.