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Sthefany Flores

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Professor comments on last week's historic event



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By: Sthefany Flores

Last Sunday, during the 67th annual Emmys, Viola Davis became the first African American woman to win Best Actress in a Drama Series. Davis's moving speech sparked the conversation of the limited opportunities for women of color in television.

Kemeshia Randle, Assistant Professor of English and African American Studies at Gardner-Webb, sees Davis's win as a positive step for African Americans in popular media. "I hope to be optimistic and say there will be more diversity," said Randle. "Things have progressed slowly...I think the change may happen. But it won't be something that we can look forward to unless there are actual black women who are writing these characters."

Davis's speech, although praised by many, has been criticized by others. Nancy Lee Grahn, a soap opera star best known for her leading role in "General Hospital" expressed her opposition on Twitter by saying "I'm a f—— actress for 40 yrs. None of us get respect or opportunity we deserve. Emmys not venue 4 racial opportunity. ALL women belittled." She then added, "I think she's the bees knees but she's elite of TC performers. Brilliant as she is. She has never been discriminated against."

Grahn received a lot of backlash for her tweets. She apologized, and her tweets have since been deleted.

"The fact that she published these tweets shows that she comes from a place of privilege," said Randle in reaction to Grahn's tweets. "Even though she deleted them later, she didn't realize that what she said affected someone negatively. [That] is problematic in itself."

Yaya Richardson, an actress in Gardner-Webb's theatre department saw Davis's win as a step forward in diversifying acting roles. "I feel like her winning will open more roles away from stereotypes, and maybe we might be able to win more awards due to our broader range in roles."