

RACIAL DISCRIMINATION AS SEEN IN *STOCKETT'S THE HELP*

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ABSTRACT: This study aims to reveal about racial discrimination from White race to Black race as seen in Kathryn Stockett's *The Help*, by applying qualitative research in which the data are gathered in the form of words and quotation from the novel, internet and other books to substantiate the research. The writers collect the data using two kind of sources, primary and the secondary sources. Primary source is taken from the novel itself and the secondary sources are taken from books internet and other relevant data. In analyzing the data, the writers are using mimetic approach which is an imitation, reflection, or representation of Human life. The result of this research shows how the racial discrimination occurs in South America particularly in Jackson, Mississippi. This novel represents how the situation back then in the era of jim crow law, where all of the aspect and accomodation in both black and white are separated for equality but it does not shows the equal treatment for black race. Instead the long preception of black race is inferior and dirty, it costs trauma, poverty, death, for black race. They are still receives all of those bad treats even after all of those suffers and hard-working. Also even when they have to serve the white race and fight for they own freedom. They have to fight against the rules that stand to torture them back then.

Keywords: *The Help, Discrimination, Black race, White race*

INTRODUCTION

Every humanbeing in this world has the same right to be treated equally and has the privillage to ask that. Meyta sigar in *The Spirit of life in France* Hodgson Burnett's *The secret garden* (2018) states "Life is temporary, so human must use every opportunity to get what they want". Unfortunately there are group of people who hate the idea to treat some individual from certain group of people or race in a good way. The different of appearance, skin color, education, belief and intelligence are reasons which cause racial discrimination practice in society. As Hughes and Kroehler state: "Human can be separated on some racial group based on their degree, education, intelligence, morality, ability, etc". In the world which

have variety of people who come from different background and culture. According to Delli Sabudu in *Constructing Woman Identity* (2012), "Equality in the sense of equivalence, where everyone is the same, would turn society into an assembly line. The awerness and cultivation of complementarities are vital for the development of society that is truly human. The society should create people rejoice in variety, being so formed that differences are a source not of friction but of joy".

Sometimes we consider such aspect when we associate ourselves into society. We tend to interact with people we think are intelligent, smart, beautiful, kind, etc, and avoid the opposite. That is how white race treating black race. They are learn about the history of slavery. People tend to

learn about the history of slavery back then, that still hapening in almost every state in America, like the one in Jackson. Through the ages from their ancestors, they are calling black race as the dirty race that is also as their slave.

As how Cooper in An Illustrated Encyclopedia of traditional Symbols. (1993) states: *“In early American society consists three big race and each of them represents their own symbol, White race based on their skin color is considered Holiness and pure for white, war for red, dirty and evil for black”*. Every behavior, movement and character of black race in some way reflects to their race and skin color.

Caroline Tampi in *Clashing The Concepts of Freedom* by Kathryn Stockett's *The Help* et al (2018) states: *“The clashing concepts of freedom occur because the whites community assume that blacks people are disease and dirty. It is actually due to the condition that shown in Kathryn Stockett's *The Help* that almost all the white think that the black are dirty who can spread many kinds of diseases. The diseases are causes by the black color”*. Stockett's novel explains about the condition and the pressure on black race, how the white people treat them like nothing but a property, slave, or people who carry out some diseases.

The discrimination toward black race have happens for a long duration. It causes so much pain and trauma to black race, they cannot even think for demanding equal rights and justice. The same as Maru in *Harlem Renaissance; A Glance on Its Rise. Movement and Figures* (2012) stated *“The poor situation in the south drive the blacks to migrate. They try to get rid of low quality of life, the rise of Jim Crow, the*

segregation of the black voters, and the spread of lynching and violence”. This situation makes the relationship of both race bind up with so much negativity, misery, and anger. And it all happened because of a mere reason; they are black race, black people with black skin color. As Bobo et al, in *Race Racism and Discrimination with cybelle fox social psychology* quartely stated (2003) *“Colorism are practice that treats person differently by the social meaning which is attched in each color of skin that they have”*. *The Help* by Kathryn Stockett's demonstrates Kathryn's personal experiences about how the racial discrimination from white race to black race happen in Jackson at the year of 1962. She potraits the situation, the pain, fear of phsical and mental violence and suffering on her work. Salama in et al, from *Women Struggle in Khaled Hosseini's A Thousand Splendid Suns* (2018) state *“Physical violence is the intentional use of physical force with the potential for causing death, disability, injury, or harm”*. *The Help* is all about the race and skin color, how black race deals with the racism and discrimination, how they survive from the pain and humiliation, and the reason behind the silent angry for a long period of time cannot speak for they own life.

This story is very interesting to study, because it describes all the things that have experiences by Stockett in her life. She want to changes people's mind by her works. She believes that the power of speaking up can makes a huge changes to people's life especially black race. Based on those reasons, the writers interest in analyzing about the racial discrimination that potraits in Stockett's *The Help*.

FINDINGS

Racial Discrimination on Social life

As Greenberg in *African Americans in the Great Depression* (2009) state “*During World War I, African Americans started to migrate in a large numbers to western and northern America, they hoped that this would give them a better chance of gaining knowledge and a rewarding well paid job. However, many black people became unemployed as they are not educated or skilled enough to take up a job, as result it was difficult for them to make their ends meet, many of them lives in abject poverty inhabiting slums.*” The discrimination such cannot touch white race, cannot use the same bathroom with with white race are some small illustrations that portrays on *The help* are dealing with the discrimination. They taking care other people’s children but rarely have the time for their own children, they give the children their love but when the children grow up, they become the one who take their parents place and ruin the life of black race .

“*I knew it, i knew it that girl was a thief the day she started. As Hilly tell the story of yule May, she make a big circle with her finger to indicate a huge stone the unimaginable worth of the ruby. I caught her taking the milk after it expired and that’s how it starts, you know first it’s washing powder, then they work their way up to towels and coats. Before you know it, they’re taking the heirlooms, hocking them for liquor pints, God knows what else she took*” (Stockett, 253).

The quotation above illustrates what happen to black race when they makes the white lady angry. White race tends to make a big fuss over anything they dislike from the black race, and it perfectly states by Yanick in *Black Women and Everyday Racism* (1998) “for an African American

it takes great strength and courage to ‘do tough’ in the face of discrimination and misrepresentations, misconceptions, and distortions of black women at the hands of white Americans “.

From the quotation before, it shows one of the help’s name, Yule May, arrested for stealing a ring that miss hilly never used because the ring does not hold any value and cannot be sold because the ruby is fake. Yule may want to send her twin boy to college but even when they works as much as they can, the money is not enough and for that reason Yule May is arrested. In the end she fails to send her twin boy to college because she need to pay the court fine as much as she and her husband save for the boys.

Racial Discriminations on Human Rights

Another reason for black race in Jackson long suffering other than white race are Jim Crow laws, as Urofsky in *Jim Crow Laws* (1954) states “*The rules that enforced racial segregation in the south between the end of reconstruction in 1877 and the beggining of the civil rights movement in the 1950s*”. That rule takes black race’s rights and freedom, it can be seen in quotation. “*And my cousin Shinelle in cauter county ? They burn up her car cause she went down to the voting station*”(Stockett, 103).

Quotation above potraits about Another rule of Jim Crow, who prohibits black race to vote and prohibits them for going there, white race even does as far as burning up the car of black women because she goes to the place that are suppose to be no harm for every people. Because she is black race then the rule applied to her. This potraits how black race’s rights are not in their own hand, they are too afraid to ask

for be treats in the same way like white, they do not own the same rights to speak or fight for their own freedom . Quotation below potraits how white race treats black race and how black people do not own their freedom to do or said what they want :

“My husband cousin, they took her toungue out. A while back it was for talking to some Washington people about the klan, you think they gone take our tongues , for talking to you ?” (Stockett, 255).

From quotation above we can see another example on how black race is being robbed on their own rights. The matter of speaking and the right to gave their own opinion, even little bit of critics to white race, can cost a life for black race. This also reveals how white race government treats black race unfairly. Members who strive to avoid intergation of white and black race, control and limits all the resources for black race, and they do not let black race have the same job as them. Black people use different facilities with poor condition since the rights to speak up does never became one of black race rights. As Gracia et al, in *Critical Prespectives on White-Authored Narratives of Black Life* (2014) state *“Due to colour of skin as discrimination against black Americans is deeply-rooted in white inhabitants of Jackson who aim at concealing racism rather than eradicating”*.

Cause of Racial Discrimination

White people preception on black people as inferior race

Suhelmi in *Pemikiran Politik Barat*. (2001) believes that *“human race is the hierachical structure which is there is a superior race can give birth to great civilizations and have natural rights to rule and enslave another races, further he*

claimed that th superior race is the white and the inferior is a black race”.

White race tends to act really harsh toward other race especially to black race, they have some ideology that the superior one have the right to do anything to the inferior one, and according to Fredickson in *Rasisme: Sejarah singkat*. (2005) *“racism has two componets,” the difference and the power”* , *racism come from attitude that sees “them/ others” different from “us”*. *The feeling different gives a reason to take advantage and power of “us” to treat “others” in ways that are considered cruel and unjust”* .

In this case white race does everything as they want to the black race, because they think black race is not educated, not smart enough, does not have a good position in society, does not own a nice house, a seceond-class human, etc. This is happened since the introduction of slavery in 1661 in virginia, from that time, people keep repeating the treats from younger to older. They treat black race as a inferior one, and the inferior status of black race can be see *from quotation below:*

“I read how even the President a the United States telling Mayor Thompson he need to do better. Put a committee together with black and white and works thing out down here , but Mayor Thompson he say to President Kennedy : “ I am not going to appoit a bi-racial committee. Let’s not kid ourselves, I believe in the separation of the races and that’s the way it’s going to be.” Few days later, the mayor come on the radio again : “ Jackson, Mississipi is the closest place to heaven there is, he say and it’s going to be like this for the rest of our lives. (Stockett, 197)

The quotation above potraits how the Goverment supposed to changes and makes

everything equal for both races, and sees everything from both sides. Using their own power to lead a state in negative and wrong way like how Weisenburg in Oral History Memoir of Karl Wiesenburg. (1965) states: “*The bills were poorly prepared, they wrong in principle, they were wrong legally, they were wrong morally, they were wrong constitutionally.*”

Then it is not hard to see there is no benefit for the black race from every rule even bills that government made, the government itself knows the fact they use their own power in wrong way and abuse the black race but they keep influencing other people by tell them that they are doing it for the sake of the state and society.

White people perception on black people as dirty race

The idea of white race belief that black race is a dirty race, in the early American society, comes from the idea that there are three big races: they are white, black and red. They believe every race represents its own symbol that refers to the color of their skin, as Cooper in An Illustrated Encyclopedia of traditional Symbols (1993) stated: “*white represents pure and holiness, black represent dirty and evil, while red represent war*”. Because of the representation as dirty race, black race keeps suffering from the discrimination by white race, they are hurting physically and mentally, every words of mocking on their appearance, or the differences color of skin become a big problem to them as white race makes every act of them has reflection to their race that are dirty, evil and carry some disease. According to Liliweri in Prasangka & Konflik: Komunikasi Lintas Budaya Masyarakat Kultural (2005) states “*The*

word race itself rotted in French and Italian language “ razza”, which can be interpreted as : “difference in variation population, or distinction based on the existence of humans, physical appearance , such as hair, eyes, skin colour, body shape, which in traditional, there are three namely : Caucasoid, Negroid, and Mongoloid”.

The action of white race on discriminating black race is as a dirty race happened because of the different skin colour, appearance and also because they get influenced by people around them, that can be seen below :

“In nonfiction, I spot a single copy of Frederick Douglass, an American slave. I grab it excited to deliver it to Aibileen, but when I open it, I see the middle section has been ripped out. Inside, someone has written NIGGER BOOK in purple crayon. I am not disturbed by the words as by the fact that handwriting looks like a third grader’s.” (Stockett, 172).

Quotation above reveals about how even the children who are still in their growing up phase get influenced by older people around them such as parents and teacher who suppose to be the one who are teaching them about the moral value, the kindness, the good things or make the conflict and situation better. Instead they influence the kids with a wrong ideology until the kids become the same as them, this portrait on how Mae Mobley teacher is teaching them in school as kids that are colored cannot go to the same school as them because they do not smart enough or how Miss Taylor ask the children to draw what we like about ourselves the best, but when she sees Mae Mobley in drawing herself colors the picture, she claps back and says black means dirty and bad face.

The impact of Racial Discrimination on Black race :

Trauma

“There are some exposures of impacts causing racial injustice and relating to reactions to the response and processes associated with the experience of racism and that is racism related Trauma” Muh Taufik, et al. In *Racism In 12 Years A Slave Movie* (2016).

The racial discrimination of white race deeply felt by the black race, it has impacted their mental by giving the black race traumas that they never want to have. It can be seen on quotation below :

“Lovenia Brown’s grandson, Robert. He got out of the hospital this weekend, went to live with Louvenia, what with his parents already dead and all. When I went over there to take them a caramel cake, Robert had a cast on his arm and bandages over his eyes, “ oh Louvenia “. Was all I could say when I saw him. Robert was laid up on the sofa asleep, they’d shaved half his head to operate, and when Robert started to stir, she asked if I wouldn’t mind going on home because Robert wakes up screaming, terrified and remembering all over again that he’s blind, she thought it might be bother me, I can’t stop thinking about it” (Stockett, 124).

The quotation above shows how scary and worry the black race. They can not even imagine what will happen if the white race finds out their cross the laws. We also can see how scary are the black race, by how Robert react to his condition after the accident. Terrible things happen to him just because he is using the white people’s bathroom. The feeling of cannot see again and remember every detail about the accident is real, it makes him afraid until he has trauma everytime he wakes up.

These events show enough about the trauma caused by white race to the black race. The white race wants the black race to obey the rules, if they do not obey it, then they receive a huge consequence. The black race is hurt deeply, but the white people seem to ignore the fact and keep terrorizing black race, haunting them without any limit in the place where they suppose to call home. Black race is too afraid to leave their house because maybe they can be the next person who become the next target.

Murdered

The most scary thing to human beings is death and that what the black race who live in Jackson feels at that time. They cannot stop thinking about every worse situation that might happen to them everyday, and it can be seen in quotation below : This story is a real story that happens in 1963, and a real example of what white people do to black race can be seen from quotation below :

“Minny’s hands is in fits. She gritting her teeth. “ shot him right in front a his children, Aibileen.”

“We gone pray for the Everses, we gone pray for Myrlie...” but it just sound so empty, so I stop. “

“Radio say his family run out the house when they heard the shots. Say he bloody, stumbling round, all the kids with blood all over em...” She slap her hand on the table, rattling the wood radio.” (Stockett, 195)

Quotation above explains about what Medgar Evers has been through, it is happened because he fights for black race own rights and black race’s voice. Krebs in *Gender, Race, and Writing of Empire* (1999): *“ In the state of southern, whites who are not satisfied with the proclamation*

of emancipation, black organizations formed to oppose it, they call it a terrorist organization Ku Klux Klan. By using the mask form a cone with hollowed eyes and long robe, they attacked the village and settlement of the Negro, they were terrorizing, torturing and killing black people at night” .

Black people get traumatic everytime they leave their own house, they terrify even when they are just passing through white people. They cannot imagine the consequences they may get if they do not obey the white people's rule. Black people feel the pain, stress and terrified, because they know exactly it maybe be them who will be the next target.

Poverty

Poverty, is the exact condition of every black person in Jackson. There are so much illustrations of poverty that portrays on *The Help*. The main idea of this story is to explain about how it feels like to become a black maid or black help to serve the white race. They are working six to eight hours from Monday to Saturday but they get paid by low wage, and it can be seen in quotation below :

“Jackson's just one white neighbourhood after next and more springing up down the road but the colored part a town, we one big anthill surrounded by state land that ain't for sale. As our number et bigger we can't spread out, our part a town just get thicker”(Stockett, 12).

Quotation above illustrates about how the condition of black race, even when they are working really hard and save every little wage, it is hard to support their own life and family. Just like Greenberg in szulkowska (2009) states that *“during World War I, African Americans started to*

migrate in a large numbers to western and northern America, they hoped that this would give them a better chance of gaining knowledge and a rewarding well paid job. However, many black people became unemployed as they were not educated or skilled enough to take up a job, as result it was difficult for them to make their ends meet, many of them lived in abject poverty inhabiting slums”.

This book clearly portrays about how the black race experiences poverty at that time. The facilities they receive are really poor, like the residence, the library, the school, hospital, even some black maids like Aibileen uses to be given worn-out clothes by white lady she working for, she cannot make enough money to buy by her own. They do not have many choices other than wore the clothes which earlier belong to the white lady.

Every little action of black people in this book portrays how they are working for the sake of their own life while still needs to deal with the discrimination from white race. And how the small community in Jackson, Mississippi treats them with no equality, ignores the painful, but expects the black people to give all they have just to receive nothing other than poverty, trauma, violence, etc.

CONCLUSION

The writers come into conclusions that *The Help* portrays the reality that still happens in our daily life, then and now. That do not hold the different about the problem of what black race face, the main issue is because they are black race and born with that black skin color. They are always treated badly with mean and harsh words even bad behavior. Jackson are getting discriminated by white race in different aspect and it is categorized as a

normal thing. It is scary to know the fact that black race faces the racial discriminations everyday.

Every rule in Jackson seems good to white race, that makes the situation even worse. There are no equal rights to black race, there are only poverty, fear, painful, terror, And death. All those things are the cost black race got for all of the hard work and effort they put for serving white people in Jackson.

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