

RACIAL DISCRIMINATION IN KATHRYN STOCKETT'S *THE HELP*

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Abstract

Kathryn Stockett's novel titled *The Help* is a narrative novel about the lives of African-American maids named Aibileen and Minny who received discriminative treatments from the white masters around 1960s in Southern United States. This research aims to answer two objectives, which are; to explore the racial discrimination acts toward the black maids and to investigate the effects of racial discrimination to the black maids' lives. Since the present writer analyzes the discriminative treatments from the white masters toward the black maids based on the real social condition in the era of 1960s in Southern United States, Sociological Approach is considered as the most suitable approach to be applied. In addition, Fred L. Pincus's theory about type of discrimination is also used in analyzing the discrimination acts. The result of this research paper shows there are two types of discrimination as seen in the novel; individual discrimination and institutional discrimination, and those discrimination acts reflect the social condition of 1960s in Southern United States. Meanwhile, racial discrimination affects the lives of the black maids in term of distrust toward white people and insecurity.

Keywords: racial discrimination, black maids, 1960s, distrust, insecurity

Intisari

Novel Kathryn Stockett yang berjudul *The Help* merupakan novel narasi yang menceritakan tentang pembantu Afrika-Amerika bernama Aibileen dan Minny yang mendapatkan perlakuan diskriminatif dari majikannya yang berkulit putih pada sekitar tahun 1960an di daerah Amerika bagian selatan. Penelitian ini bertujuan menjawab dua objektif, yaitu: untuk mengeksplorasi tindakan diskriminasi ras terhadap pembantu berkulit hitam dan menyelidiki efek-efek yang disebabkan diskriminasi ras terhadap kehidupan para pembantu kulit hitam. Karena penulis menganalisis perlakuan diskriminatif dari majikan kulit putih terhadap pembantu kulit hitam berdasarkan kondisi sosial yang sebenarnya di era 1960an di daerah Amerika bagian selatan, Sociological Approach disadari sebagai pendekatan yang paling sesuai untuk diterapkan. Selain itu, teori yang digagas Fred L. Pincus tentang tipe-tipe diskriminasi juga digunakan untuk menganalisis tindakan diskriminasi tersebut. Hasil dari penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa ada dua tipe diskriminasi yang terlihat di novel ini; individual discrimination dan institutional discrimination, dan tindakan diskriminasi tersebut merefleksikan kondisi sosial di tahun 1960an di daerah Amerika bagian selatan. Di samping itu, diskriminasi ras mempengaruhi kehidupan para pembantu kulit hitam dalam hal ketidakpercayaan terhadap orang kulit putih dan keamanan.

Kata Kunci: diskriminasi ras, pembantu kulit hitam, 1960an, ketidakpercayaan, ketidak-amanan

INTRODUCTION

This world provides us with the diversity, because many races exist in the world. Races distinguish people based on some aspects, such as physical traits, culture, habits, clothes, way of living, etc. However, the treatments toward all people in the world should be equal. It does not matter who they are, who their descendant is, what their jobs are, gender, or position, all human beings deserve the equality in all life aspects. Unfortunately, some people assume that people who come from certain race do not deserve the equalities, which practice is usually called discrimination.

Among countries all over the world, the United States has the complex problems of racial issues in its history. These racial issues have taken in the relationship between black and white, Mexican – American and white, Indian and white Asian, and European immigrants and white (Asante 7). Based on history, the conflict between black race and white race has occurred decades ago. America was firstly inhabited by the Native American, but then European colonists arrived there and tried to establish settlement (“The Story of Race Transcript”). Based on the history and the practice of discrimination itself, it is suitable to analyze the discrimination acts through a novel which setting is in the United States.

Kathryn Stockett’s novel *The Help* brings the racial issue towards the black maids who work for white people. They experience unfavorable treatments in the domestic area and also in public places. This paper is aimed to explore the racial discrimination towards black maids which are seen in the novel and to investigate the effects of racial discrimination to the black maids’ lives. By analyzing *The Help* hopefully people can consider that racial discrimination should not be done to anyone, anywhere, and anytime.

Related with the aims, this paper applies the sociological approach. As can be seen in *The Help*, Kathryn Stockett tried to show how black women who work as a maid in white people’s house are treated improperly by the masters. To analyze how the story can be called as the representation of society at that time, sociological approach is considered as the most appropriate one to be applied. It is based on the idea that a work of art cannot be taken apart from the society in which it is created.

Sociological approach starts with a conviction that arts relations to society are vitally important,

and that the investigation of this relationship may organize and deepen one’s aesthetic responses to a work of art. Art is not created in a vacuum; it is the work not simply of a person, but of an author fixed in time and space, answering to a community to which he is important. The sociological critic, therefore, is interested in understanding the social milieu and the expert manner in which the critic responds to it (Scott 123).

Library research is the method in conducting the analysis. The main source of the data is taken from the novel entitled *The Help* written by Kathryn Stockett. To support the main data, the present writer acquired background information through the relevant books, articles, and internet sources as the secondary data. By taking data from those sources, the background information needed in this paper will be fulfilled.

I. Racial Discrimination and African American’s Life in the United States

Rose wrote Arthur M. Schlesinger’s definition about discrimination, saying that discrimination may be defined as the differential treatment of individuals considered to belong to particular groups or social categories (114). On the other hand, discrimination also refers to the treatment of consideration of, or making a distinction in favor of or against, a person or thing based on the group, class, or category to which that person or thing belongs rather than on individual merit. Discrimination can be the effect of some laws or established practices that confers privileges on a certain class or denies privileges to a certain class because of race, age, sex, nationality, religion, or handicap (Nicholson 188). It can be concluded that discrimination has something to do with social categories.

People can be discriminated based on some social aspects, such as age, gender, disability, employment, language, nationality, race, religious, etc. In this case, this paper discusses the discrimination which is caused by race. Race distinct people based on many aspects, and the most obvious thing is seen from the physical characteristics. Race is used for locating or placing people according to culturally defined social positions (Rose 10). When people are located or placed based on their races, sometimes they have different treatment in the ‘place’ they are located with other people’s ‘place’.

Fred as inspired from Carmichael and Hamilton’s book *Black Power* re-design three types of discrimination

based on the subject of discrimination; individual discrimination, institutional discrimination, and structural discrimination. Individual discrimination refers to the behavior individual members of one race/ethnic group that is intended to have a differential and/or harmful effect on the members of another race/ethnic group (Pincus 83). For institutional discrimination and structural discrimination, they are slightly similar. Both types refer to the policies of majority institutions and the behavior of individuals who implement these policies to control the institutions. However in structural discrimination the point is not the intent of the discrimination acts, but the effect of keeping minority groups in a subordinate position (84). By using this Pincus's classification, this paper also classifies the discrimination acts seen in the story.

The history of racial discrimination in United States can be briefly explained by these two historical events; Jim Crow Law and Civil Rights Movement. Jim Crow was the name of the racial caste system which operated primarily, but not exclusively in southern and border states, between 1877 and the mid-1960s. Jim Crow was more than a series of rigid anti-black laws. It was a way of life. Under Jim Crow, African Americans were relegated to the status of second class citizens. Jim Crow law gives the huge differentiation between black and white people. They are separated in most of all life aspects such as in public facilities and way of life. The term "Jim Crow" is inspired from a song titled "Jim Crow" written by Thomas Dartmouth "Daddy" Rice in the middle of 19th century. On 1828, Rice who was an actor at that time performed on stage as "Jim Crow" which exaggerated the stereotype of black character (Pilgrim "What was Jim Crow").

Meanwhile, Civil Right Movement was the reaction against Jim Cow Law. Some black people could not resist the discrimination acts anymore, so they started a movement to demand the equal rights for them. It was not easy for Southern blacks to change the racial practices, since Southern whites are very resistant to changes. That is why the movement should be supported from external party, and NAACP (National Association for the Advancement of Colored People) is one of it. (Klarman 444) Since then, NAACP appeared as one of the civil right organizations which help black people fighting against discrimination during that era. Civil rights movement has been started since 1950s. Since Jim Crow Law legalized the discrimination primarily on public facilities, they used public facilities

as the media of their movement (Morris, 18). The movement could not be done easily. There was a white organization named Ku Klux Klan which were aimed at intimidating blacks and preventing them from taking their place in the society, sprang up throughout the North and the South (Estell 38). Ku Klux Klan is regarded as a history of hate in America that has led people throughout history to extremes of violence against others simply because of their race, nationality, religion, or lifestyle. (6)

The Story of *The Help* takes place in Jackson, the capital city of the state of Mississippi. Based on history, Mississippi became a major theatre of struggle during the Civil Rights Movement of the mid-20th century because of its resistance to equal rights for its black citizens. Medgar Evers is known as the influential figure in the era of civil rights movement in Mississippi. He was one of the state's most impassioned activist, orator, and visionary for change. He fought for equality and fought against brutality. Besides, he was also the first field secretary of NAACP (Darvis "Medgar Evers and the Origin of the Civil Rights Movement in Mississippi").

The concept of equal treatment or nondiscriminatory has not been applied properly in United States, especially in terms of employment. In the past, on the era when racial discrimination became the main issue in United States, skin color determines what kind of job that a person can do for living. In a race-conscious society like United States, those who are 'colored' (as opposed to 'white') have generally been put in inferior positions and treated accordingly. In almost every American town there has long been a close connection between the tasks people perform and the place in which they lie, and the color of their skin. Menial work is disproportionately the province of 'colored' citizens, the shabbier neighborhoods their principle domain. White people have tended to have a greater percentage of better and more varied jobs and, in many instances, finer homes in better neighborhoods (Rose 11). In other words, the fact says that people's social positions are culturally determined. It is not because of their skin color, but mostly about what kind of culture and social environment they are living in.

In a family, women or especially wives are considered as the person who does the domestic jobs such as cooking, cleaning the house, taking care of the whole family members, responsible for the bills, etc. There are lots of works to do if a woman decided to be

a housewife. In fact, not all women can only do their duties as housewives without taking another side job in order to earn money. There are many women whose fathers or husbands were unable to earn money because of various reasons. Therefore, they had to engage income-producing activities to support themselves and their families. (147) As the consequence, some women need to work very hard because they have two big responsibilities at the same time.

Working as maid is a common choice of black women to earn money for living. Aside of farming, the next largest group of black women was employed as laundresses and domestic servants (153).

Countless numbers of Black women have ridden buses to their white “families,” where they not only cooked, cleaned, and executed other domestic duties, but where they also nurtured their “other” children, shrewdly offered guidance to their employers and frequently became honorary members of their white “families.” (Collins 2)

The black maids work for white people in their houses. They do the domestic works like what they do in their own houses; cooking, cleaning house, taking care of white children, and any other works depend on what their mistress ask them to do. As the maids, black women mostly suffered with the rules their mistress make for them.

Black women often worked 14–16 hours a day ... (J. Brown 1938) They were allowed little time off to meet their own domestic responsibilities, despite the facts that the majority of black domestics had children. ... Her own children were left in the care of husband or older siblings (Katzman 1978). Low wages were endemic. They had to be supplemented by children taking in laundry or doing odd jobs. Many black women testified that they could survive only through the tradition of the service pan—the term for leftover food that was at the disposal of the colored cook (Lerner 1973, p. 229) (Glenn 153).

It can be concluded that living as black maids in United States during 1960s was not easy. Black women at that time were supposed to do both their own domestic jobs and their mistress domestic jobs. The history of racial ethnic women’s work in US reveals their oppression not just as women but also as members

of colonized minorities. Race, gender, class interact in such a way that the histories of white and racial ethnic women are intertwined (Glenn 158). Those black maids are unequally treated by the white mistress. By saying ‘separate but equal’ idea, they discriminate the black maids as if they are alien. As consequence, working as a maid causes black women get more underestimated.

II. Racial Discrimination towards Black Maids and the Effects of Racial Discrimination in Their Lives

2.1. Racial Discrimination towards Black Maids

The black maids as seen in *The Help* experience racial discrimination which is done by their masters. There are various unequal treatments which the black maids get while they are working in white family’s house. The black maids have to face the reality that their lives are not easy. They do not only have to deal with improper treatments from their masters and the society, but they also have to deal with their own family problems.

The present writer classify the racial discrimination acts towards the black maids based on two categories; domestic and public discrimination.

2.1.1. Individual Discrimination

Based on Fred L. Pincus’s classification of types of discrimination, individual discrimination includes a wide range of behavior by majority-group individuals or small groups to the minority group from other race (82). There are three forms of individual discrimination acts the present writer finds in the story of *The Help*, they are; verbal abuse, unequal treatment, and prejudice.

2.1.1.1. Verbal Abuse

Verbal abuse is one of the forms of discrimination act that is done individually between the white masters to the black maids. There are some words that are regarded as racist words that are used to describe intended race. The racist words found in the story of *The Help* are the usual words used by white people to call or mention black people. Those are; ‘Nigra’, ‘Negro’, and ‘black’. The word ‘Nigra’ and ‘Negro’ has the same meaning. Negro refers to the member of human native race in Africa that has specific physical feature (dark skin), while ‘Nigra’ is considered as the southern dialect

used by people in southern United States (“Nigger”). ‘Black’ is intended also to call the Negro people but it uses the word which directly tells the skin color which is black. Those words have offensive meaning, so that is why the words are considered as a trigger of verbal abuse.

Verbal abuse happens in certain condition when the white masters are angry. It can be seen from the story that verbal abuse usually happens when the white masters want to show anger. Moreover, the social position makes white people not hesitate to say any offensive statements to the black maids. As the masters, white people avoid being disrespected by their maids. So that whenever their black maids’ behaviors are not appropriate, they will just do the abuse.

“Spit. In my face. A Negro in my home. Trying to act white.” (Stockett 363) Constantine, Skeeter’s maid experiences being verbally abused by Skeeter’s mother. Ms. Phelan uses the word ‘Negro’ and ‘white’ on her statements. As can be seen in the quotation above, Ms. Phelan calls Constantine as ‘Negro’ who lives in her house. The use of word ‘white’ refers to white people who considered as the masters. By saying ‘white’, Ms. Phelan wants to tell that their people and her people are different, and not permitted to show the same actions. Since Constantine lives in the house as the maid, she only permitted to do her duties, and most importantly is putting high respect to the master.

“Nobody would believe something you wrote, Nigra.” (Stockett 442) Aibileen also experienced the offensive words said by white people toward her. Hilly has put her suspicion on the black maids around Jackson that they are the people who help Skeeter with the stories written in the book, and one of them is Aibileen. Hilly says it angrily because she feels that her experience has been written by someone. The statement above shows that Hilly is demeaning by saying that nobody will trust something black people write. Hilly emphasizes that black people, like Aibileen will not be trusted, even she is educated and talented. Since the word ‘Nigra’ refers to the race of black people, and it is used in term of offensive statement, that racist word gives more sense of discriminative treatment which is done verbally.

2.1.1.2. Unequal Actions

The use of separate toilet is the discrimination act that is mostly showed in the story of *The Help*. As the person who hires a black maid in her house, Hilly is the first person who comes up with the idea that

white people cannot use the same toilet with the black maids. She is the one who gives more effort to struggle for such an idea. Hilly is characterized as a high class woman who is very arrogant.

“Oh Hilly, I wish you’d use the guest bathroom,” say Miss Leefolt, re-arranging her cards. “Aibileen doesn’t clean in the back until after lunch.” “But the guest bathroom’s where the help goes,” Miss Hilly say. Then Miss Walter nod, like she explaining it all. “She’s upset cause the Nigra uses the inside bathroom and so do we.” (Stockett 7)

This conversation occurs when she is having Bridge Club in Elizabeth Leefolt’s house. She knows that she really needs to go to the toilet, but she decisively rejects it. Through her statement, Hilly assumes that Elizabeth’s bathroom is the one which is used by the black maid too, because there is no colored bathroom there. It can be said that Hilly have built a big gap between white people and black people by showing this attitude.

Aibileen also listens to Hilly’s statement, because she is there when Hilly says that. Indirectly, verbal abuse happens here (related to 3.1.1.1.). For her, Hilly’s attitude is not something new. The idea of toilet separation has been applied in Jackson before.

Real quiet, I open the napkin drawer, more concerned about Miss Leefolt seeing me than what they saying. Everwhere in town they got a colored bathroom, and most the houses do too. (Stockett 8)

Most of the houses in Jackson have built the bathroom for the colored people, in this case for the black maids. It can be easier for Hilly to demonstrate and influence other white people to do the same thing. Through the quotation, it can be seen that Aibileen has realized that Hilly’s attitude is the condition that normally happens to black maids.

The toilet for black maids in white people’s house is actually not a kind of normal bathroom like the white families have. Through the previous quotation, Aibileen describes how the bathroom looks like.

It’s just a little room they built inside the carport. Inside is a toilet and a little sink attached to the wall. A pull cord for the lightbulb. Paper have to set on the floor. (Stockett 90)

The condition of the toilet is not proper. It is very small and located in the carport. Inside the bathroom there is only one single toilet, a little sink, and tissue paper without the holder. Aibileen has to deal with the condition. Discrimination acts do not let them down and make her give up on struggling against it. She does not struggle to go out of racial discrimination, but she struggle to survive on this situation. It is because she knows that she needs to earn money no matter what.

Hilly starts her actions on supporting separate toilet for the black maids by authoritatively forcing Skeeter to put her initiative letter in the newspaper where Skeeter works. She is trying to influence all white people in Jackson, not only her friends.

“It’s called the Home Help Sanitation Initiative—*William Junior you get down or I will snatch you baldheaded Yule May get in here*—and I want it in thisweek.”

I am editor of the League newsletter. But Hilly is president. And she’s trying to tell me what to print. (Stockett 60)

Skeeter works as the journalist in newsletter company, *Jackson Journal*. She is one of the white characters who come up with equal treatments to the black maids. Of course, she is not interested in the initiative letter that Hilly writes at all.

“I will *not* print that initiative.”

She looks at me, holding very still. “I want that initiative in the newsletter before election time,” she says and points to the ceiling, “or I’m calling upstairs, missy.” (Stockett 279)

Assumptions lead to discrimination acts. What Hilly struggles for is caused by some assumptions of white people toward black people in general. On most white people opinion, black people are dirty and bring diseases. It is because of their dark skin. Black is considered as bad, and dirty. That is how most white people see black people. In the story of *The Help* the black maids are discriminated because they think that black maids are dirty and bring disease. This assumption leads white people to think about separating the toilet to the black maids as what Hilly says in this statement: “That’s exactly why I’ve designed the Home Help Sanitation Initiative,” Miss Hilly say. “As a disease-preventative measure.” (Stockett 8).

Since white people thinks that black people are dirty and bring disease, they do not want them to use the same utensils as they use. They only let the maids to use the same fork, spoon, plate, and other utensils all the time they are working there, and those are not going to be used by the white masters. It can be proved from Minny’s mother advice to Minny when Minny is going to have her first day working with white family.

“Rule Number Three: when you’re cooking white people’s food, you taste it with a different spoon. You put that spoon to your mouth, think nobody’s looking, put it back in the pot, might as well throw it out.

“Rule Number Four: You use the same cup, same fork, same plate every day. Keep it in a separate cupboard and tell that white woman that’s the one you’ll use from here on out.

“Rule Number Five: you eat in the kitchen. (Stockett 39)

This kind of discrimination is one of the evidences of the white people’s stereotype towards black people. The black maids are judged as dirty and bring disease because of their skin color. White people do various things which aimed to reduce any physical contacts with the black maid. Even they have already wore white uniforms with all the white stuffs, it is still not enough for their masters to at least pretend that they are clean.

2.1.1.3. Prejudice

Almost all of black people live in poverty since their salary is very low. Unfortunately, for white people, the poverty faced by the black maids leads them to the acts of prejudice. Whenever the white masters lost something in their houses, they will just accuse their maids for stealing because of an assumption that they are poor and must need money.

“She telling everybody in town I’m stealing! That’s why I can’t get no work! That witch done turned me into the Smart-Mouthed Criminal Maid a Hind County!”

“Hold on, Minny, get your breath --” (Stockett 21)

The conversation happens between Minny and Aibileen. Minny is very upset that she is fired because of something that she does not do at all. It can be seen that there is a feeling of anger and sad in Minny. Minny is more miserable because she knows that Hilly tells

that accusation to other white people in Jackson. As a consequence, it will be difficult for her to look for another job if everybody believes what Hilly says about her.

Aibileen as the main character in the story also experiences being accused as a thief. Hilly is the one who always distrusts the black maids, not only the one who works in her house but also her friend's house.

"I ain't stole no silver service, Miss Leefolt," I say and just the words make me want a run.

Miss Leefolt whispers, "She says she doesn't have them, Hilly."

Miss Hilly don't even act like she heard. She raises her eyebrows at me and says, "Then it behooves me to inform you that you are fired, Aibileen." Miss Hilly sniffs. "I'll be calling the police. They know me." (Stockett 440)

Hilly hates the black maids more after the publication of *Help*. She is very sure that the maids in Jackson have written it. To express her anger, she accuses almost all the black maids in Jackson so that they will be fired by their masters. In this case, Elizabeth's loss of her silver stuffs triggers Hilly to accuse Aibileen. Through this quotation it also can be seen that Hilly is arrogant and authoritative. Again, Hilly takes advantage from her high position to do whatever she wants. She says that she will bring Aibileen to the police, confessing that everything can be easier because all the police know who she is.

2.1.2. Institutional Discrimination

Based on Fred L. Pincus's definition, institutional discrimination refers to the policies of major institutions. Like other formal policies, the policies made by the major institution have certain purpose. Fred said that the goal of discrimination is to keep the minority group in subordinate position within society. Sometimes, institutional discrimination is embodied in laws and governments policy (83). In this case, the institutional discrimination that are shown in the story is related to the governments' policy which commands to separate public facilities between black people and white people.

Racial issue does not only make a big gap between white people and black people in terms of education level, but it also leads to the separation of public facilities for both of them. In Jackson, Mississippi, black people and white people have different housing areas. Kathryn

Stockett through her novel *The Help* gives the readers the pictures of how society at that time distinguished people's lives based on skin color.

In the story of the *The Help*, there are some public facilities described, one of them is public housing. So Jackson's just one white neighborhood after the 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 numbers get bigger, we can't spread out. Our part a town just gets thicker. (Stockett 12)

Through this quotation, Kathryn Stockett clearly described how Jackson at that time was. There are separate housing for white people and black people. White neighborhood is very different from black neighborhood. It is located springing up down the road. In contrast, black neighborhood is only one big area which is very crowded, surrounded with state land

Beside public transportation, there is also separated library for the black people built in Jackson. The conversation above occurs between Aibileen and Skeeter.

"Go down to the State Street Library. They have a whole room full of Southern writers. Faulkner, Eudora Welty—"

Aibileen gives me a dry cough. "You know colored folks ain't allowed in that library."

I sit there a second, feeling stupid. "I can't believe I forgot that." The colored library must be pretty bad. (Stockett 154)

Through this quotation, it can be said that Skeeter is not a typical of discriminative person. She asks Aibileen to go to the library instead, because she knows that Aibileen likes reading. Unfortunately, her suggestion cannot be accepted because Aibileen realizes that the library Skeeter intends is not for black people. It is a proof that there is a separate library for black people and white people. Skeeter says that library for colored people is bad and looks very contrast to white's library.

Hospital building is also separated for black and white people. It can be seen from Aibileen's story that she writes for Skeeter's book.

"...I never seen that much red come out a person and I grab the boy, I grab them four fingers. Tote

him to the colored hospital cause I didn't know where the white one was. But when I got there, a colored man stop me and say, *Is this boy white?*"

....

"And I say, Yessuh, and he say, *Is them his white fingers?* And I say, Yessuh, and he say, *Well, you better tell em he your high yellow cause that colored doctor won't operate on a white boy in a Negro hospital.* And then a white policeman grab me and he say, *Now you look a here—*" (Stockett 151)

The quotation above is the evidence that separate hospital for black and white people exists. Based on the dialogue, Aibileen tells her story that she is in a dilemma where she has to bring an injured white boy to the hospital, because she does not know where white hospital is. Unfortunately, the sick boy is rejected because the hospital does not accept white patient. It can be seen how emergency situation will not influence the rule about separate facilities for black and white people. If it is seen from another point of view, racial discrimination does not only affect black people's lives, but also white people's live.

There are still many aspects that are separated because of racial issue. It is seen when Skeeter finds a booklet which content is about the rules for Blacks and Whites. The cover of the booklet says "Compilation of Jim Crow Laws of the South" (Stockett 172). When she opens it, she finds the list of what colored people can and cannot do in Southern state. The booklet clearly shows how black people's lives are regulated by the government as the effect of Jim Crow Laws. Those rules say that there are separated facilities for Blacks and Whites such as hospital, barbershop, schools, movie houses, restrooms, ballparks, phone booths, libraries, and also circus shows. It is not only in public facilities, Blacks and Whites are also separated in terms of way of life such as marriage and burial grounds.

The discrimination as seen in the novel is clearly considered as the reflection of the real society in Southern United States, especially in Jackson, Mississippi around 1960s. This kind of separation becomes the usual condition there. Every single thing is separated between black people and white people, for example; hospital, transportation, school, library, marriage, death, etc. It shows how both races did not have coexisted life. Jim Crow Law has set both white and black people's lives. However, the one that experience the worse condition is African-American people as the minority group.

2.2. The Effects of Racial Discrimination toward the Black Maids' Lives

Based on the story of *The Help*, Black people cannot live peacefully around white people. The black people's rights and freedom are denied by the rules called Jim Crow Law. The Jim Crow Law has separated black people and white people into two contrastive lives. The influence of Jim Crow Laws is very strong. The black maids' lives are restricted under the Jim Crow Law. NAACP, the black protest organization, appears as the black people's hope for freedom. In fact, NAACP's movements cannot go smoothly. In the story of *The Help*, there is a scene showing that NAACP is being threatened since its movement and Jim Crow Law are contradictory. It proves that black people, especially those who break 'boundary', can be a target of violence at any time and any places.

The radio man come into tune, hollering, "—almost ten years serving as the Field Secretary for the N-double-A-C-P. Still no word from the hospital but wounds are said to be—"

"Who?" I say.

Minnie stare at me like I ain't got my head on. "Medgar Evers. Where you been?"

....

"KKK shot him. Front a his house. A hour ago." (Stockett 194 – 195)

The quotation above occurs after Aibileen's bus is stopped because the driver said a negro got shot by Ku Klux Klan (KKK). In fact, that negro the driver addresses is Medgar Ever. Medgar Ever was the first field secretary for the NAACP in Mississippi. He led the demonstrations and was involved in boycott campaign. He is one of the most vocal black people who struggle for the civil right movement. His presence has been put as the target of numerous threats. His death becomes a new threat for the black people as told in the story of *The Help*.

The presence of Medgar Ever as one of the NAACP's protesters is regarded as the representation of black people's eagerness in getting equality and freedom. Unfortunately, common black people cannot do any movement to break the rules. However, it is not an easy thing to fight against inequality, and Medgar Ever's death is the proof. So that it can be concluded that the struggle against the racial issue in the United States is a serious thing. For other common black people like

Aibileen and Minny, what happens to Medgar Evers is considered as a threat. It triggers the idea that this case can also be encountered to any black people including them. As consequence, that idea raises the feeling of insecurity.

3.2.2 The Distrust Toward White People

Racial assumptions and accusations among white people are caused by their distrust toward black people, and that causes them to do racial discrimination. As a consequence, the acts of racial discrimination which are done by white people trigger the distrust toward white people also. Black people have experienced various discriminative treatments by white people, what they have in their mind is all white people are the same, that they are all discriminative. The black people characters, in the story of *The Help*, show their distrust toward white people through some statements.

“What makes you think colored people need your help?” Minny stands up, chair scraping. “Why you even care about this? You *white*.”

I look at Aibileen. I've never had a colored person speak to me this way.

(Stockett 165)

This conversation involves Minny and Skeeter. When Skeeter is trying to ask Minny to help her writing the book, Minny shows the unexpected reaction. Minny does not seem comfortable when there is a white person comes to her and asks for help. Minny as described in the story is known as a sharp-tongued person. She does not hesitate to say rude words to anyone including white people. Based on quotation above, Minny is being rude to Skeeter. It shows that she does not trust Skeeter as a white person. Even though Skeeter has explained her good intention that she wants to help black people, Minny still cannot trust Skeeter. It is normal when black people have such a feeling toward white people. Minny has experienced being treated badly by white people, and all she knows is that all white people are evil. On another side, Minny's reaction indicates that she has never met a kind white person in her life before. It can be said that Minny shows a normal reaction since she has never met a white person who kind to her.

Discrimination acts toward black people have been a worst dream for black people, especially those who work as maids in white people families. Based on

the black maids' experiences, almost all white people are discriminative. It is not surprising that the black maids have negative assumptions toward white people. Black people's unsafe feeling and their distrust toward white people are considered as the effects of racial discrimination as seen in the story of *The Help*. Black people realize that they cannot have freedom in their lives since the presence of black people is considered harmful to white people, just the same as black people who think that white people are harmful to their lives. Besides, all the bad treatments also cause black people's distrust toward white people. All they know is that white people are always discriminative, so when a white person like Skeeter comes to black people and ask for help, it should be suspected. In fact, not all white people are bad. In conclusion, both races have bad feeling toward each other. It is considered as the cause – effect thing that bad feeling toward black people leads white people to do racial discrimination acts, and vice versa, bad feeling toward white people is the effect of racial discrimination itself.

CONCLUSION

Kathryn Stockett's novel *The Help* presents the story of black maids who live in the society where discrimination acts vividly happen. Through the analysis on the racial discrimination acts experienced by the black maids and the effects, the present writer finds out that the story is related to the real social condition around 1960s in the Southern United States when black people are restricted and threatened by the white people and the law. Answering the research questions and based on objectives of the study, the present writer finds two classifications of discrimination acts that are done by white people to the black maids. Those classifications are; individual discrimination and institutional discrimination.

Individual discrimination covers the discrimination acts that are done individually by the white masters. These acts are caused by several negative assumptions towards black maids and regularly happen inside the house. The present writer identifies that there are three forms of individual discrimination that can be seen in *The Help*; verbal abuse, unequal actions, and prejudice. In verbal abuse, there are some words that are considered as racist words, such as 'Nigra', 'Negro', and 'black'. Those words are intended to call or address the black maids in an offensive way. The anger and the willingness of the white people to control

others trigger the interaction that raises verbal abuse. In unequal actions, there are some discrimination acts experienced by the black maids that are caused by the assumption that black maids are dirty and disease carriers. This leads to the decision to separate the toilet and the kitchen utensils for the black maids. The prejudice of the white masters toward their black maids is shown when the black maids are alleged to be thieves. Since black maids live in poverty, it is very easy for white people to judge and accuse them of stealing.

Institutional discrimination covers the discriminative acts that are practiced based on the governments' policies. This kind of discrimination is mostly shown in public area. The black maids' lives are restricted in using public facilities (hospital, schools, transportation, libraries, burial place, barbershop, movie house, etc.) and also in marriage and death. These discriminative acts are related to the Jim Crow Law which is applied during that era.

There are two things that are regarded as the effects of racial discrimination toward the black maids' lives; the feeling of insecurity on the black maids' lives and the distrust toward white people. The feeling of insecurity comes when one of the black protesters is killed. The black maids consider that the murder is the prove that living as black people is hard, and whenever they break the rules of Jim Crow Law, bad thing will happen to them. The distrust toward white people appears as the consequence of bad treatments the black maids get from their white masters. They believe that all white people are just the same, that they are bad and discriminative. In fact, there is a certain white individual who helps them to get better lives as black people.

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