

**RACE DISCRIMINATION WITHIN PINK-COLLAR WORKER BLACK
WOMEN IN AMERICAN SOCIETY: CRITICAL RACE FEMINISM
STUDY ON *THE HELP* NOVEL BY KATHRYN STOCKETTS (2009)**



PUBLICATION ARTICLE

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APPROVAL

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ABSTRAK

*Topik dari penelitian ini adalah tentang diskriminasi ras terhadap perempuan kulit hitam yang terjadi di Jackson, Mississippi, Amerika. Diskriminasi ras pada perempuan kulit hitam dijadikan sebagai objek utama dalam penelitian ini karena bentuk diskriminasi terhadap perempuan kulit hitam, dalam cerita ini yang bekerja sebagai pembantu terlihat dari awal hingga akhir cerita pada novel *The Help* karya Kathryn Stocketts. Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk menyelidiki lebih dalam tentang bentuk diskriminasi ras terhadap pembantu kulit hitam serta alasan dibalik ditulisnya cerita tersebut. Penelitian ini menggunakan teori Critical Race Feminism untuk menganalisis apa saja indikator atau bentuk diskriminasi ras terhadap pembantu kulit hitam serta pelanggaran hak yang terjadi dimasa itu. Hasil dari penelitian ini mengindikasikan bahwa terdapat dua jenis diskriminasi terhadap pembantu kulit hitam dengan tiga indikator penyebabnya.*

Kata Kunci: Diskriminasi Ras, Pembantu Kulit Hitam, Critical Race Feminism

ABSTRACT

*The topic in this research is race discrimination towards black women that happen in Jackson, Mississippi, America. Race discrimination to the black women becomes the main object of the study because the idea can be seen in all of the chapter in *The Help* novel by Kathryn Stocketts. The purpose of this research is to establish deep investigation of the cause of the American society toward black maids. This research applies Critical race Feminism to investigate what kind of discriminations, how black women were treated, and what is the reason of the story written or sociological aspect that affect the writer. The findings of the research indicates that there are two kinds of race discrimination to the black maids with three cause indicators.*

Keywords: Race Discrimination, Black Women, Critical Race Feminism

1. INTRODUCTION

Discrimination's problem had ever occurred in America caused so many conflicts. Discrimination is one of the dark part of African- American's life history. Female figures is very interesting to talk about. Especially about black women. Nowadays, there are so many cases submitted as evidence to undermine the perceptions, among others, not all societies were discovered that they provided balanced gender roles between men and women (Bryson, 1992). The common-sense term race, and the American understanding of race is used as a foundation in *The Help* novel, and therefore it is necessary to understand how the common-sense term race originated and how the understanding of race evolved and became the common-sense term used today as well as the implied common-sense connotations aligned with race. Theories of racism will be looked at thoroughly to establish the different cultural aspects of racism, which are implied and described in *The Help*.

The Help is the first novel of the American author, Kathryn Stockett. *The Help* publish by Penguin Books in America. Stockett's *The Help* offers a multitude of examples of racial discrimination against black inhabitants of Jackson, Mississippi. Almost every white character demonstrated in the novel shows hatred toward the blacks and treats them with scorn and contempt as if they were second-class citizens without full rights and benefits.

Critical Race Feminism (CRF) originates from critical legal theory, feminist legal theory, and critical race theory. According to Wing (2003), critical race feminism serves as a challenge answer to the invisibility of women of color in laws that are deemed as neutral, and challenges the idea that the law is balanced, when it instead perpetuates race, gender, and class hierarchies. The tenets of CRF speak to the uniqueness of women color. CRF emphasizes that the experiences that shape the perspectives of women color are different from those that impact the lives of men of color, white women and white men. Second, CRF theorists are concerned with the various forms of oppression, and the ways that oppression manifests in the

lives of women of color due to the intersectionality of race, class, and gender. Third, CRF focuses on anti-essentialism in that it suggests that women of color have multiple political identities that should be considered. Further, the experiences of white women do not necessarily mimic those of women of color, and the experiences of men of color do not automatically speak to the experiences of women of color (Wing, 2003; Evans-Winters & Esposito, 2010). Fourth, critical race feminism is multidisciplinary in that it pools from various fields of study and from various theories such as black feminist thought (Wing, 1997; Evans-Winters & Esposito, 2010).

2.METHOD

The type of this study is qualitative study which usually in descriptive form because it concerned with providing description of the phenomena that occur naturally. The object of the study is a novel entitled *The Help* written by Kathryn Stocketts in 2009 that analyze race discrimination using Critical Race Feminism. This novel was published by Penguin Books of United States. This research takes the data source from two kinds of sources namely: Primary and Secondary data source. *The Help* novel used as the primary object of the research and the secondary research takes from data related to the study. In collecting the data, the researcher read the novel, read the translation, read some related references, using internet to get journal, article, etc, then collect the data from the novel. Technique of analyzing data is the researcher used content analysis to analyze the data. Content analysis is a research tools used to determine the presence of certain words or concepts within texts or sets of texts.

3.FINDING AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Sociological Aspect of *The Help* Novel

Sociological aspect that underlying Kathryn in writing this novel is because she grew on the same situation. She lives in Jackson, Mississippi and grow with her black maid Demetrie. She wants to make the reader

aware with the meaning of the real humanity. Kathryn Stocketts imagines that she is a black woman and how does it feels. In the end of her statement, she wants the readers, especially women to realize that they are just human who don't distinguish from each other. Her regret to Demetrie is the reason *why The Help* is written. Further, sociological aspect underlying Kathryn Stocketts in writing the novel is that she had no chance to ask Demetrie how did it feel to live and serve for white people in Mississippi.

3.2 Indicators of Race Discrimination to the Pink-collar Black Women

3.2.1 Race

Race refers to the observable, physical, differences, such as skin color among people in society. It was started from the explanation about where black women lived.

3.2.2 Gender

Gender refers to the women's role and their personal identities. Gender's role emphasizes environmental conditions and influence society like transferring norms, value, beliefs, or behavior.

3.2.3 Class

Class refers to the social class. It refers broadly to one's position in the United States based on income, education level, and access to other important resources.

After analyzing the novel using critical race feminism theory, the researcher found that race discrimination towards black women happen because of some reason like education, social class, and law. Those discrimination shows from the beginning of the story, when black maids have separate toilet, dishes, chair, etc. Violation also happen within black maids, like they can't use public facilities and transportation. From the perspective of critical race feminism theory, the researcher conclude that Kathryn addresses race discrimination in *The Help* because that's her own experience problem and that's the real event happen in the century.

3.3 Black Women were Treated and Against Discrimination Depicts by The Author in the Work of *The Help* Novel

Kathryn Stocketts, the author uplifts discrimination issue based on what happened in her past. She makes the plot of the story suitable with what she experienced in the past. Black women in the novel get worse treatment from white people especially white women as their boss. It's shown from the beginning of the story that black maids always get discrimination in white's house. It starts from where black maids have to use separate toilet, separate dishes, must be obey the rules even it's nonsense, etc. As Yanick St. Jean (1998) states in his book, "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". So, it is not a simple thing to against discrimination for black women.

The author depicts how black women against discrimination with a gorgeous idea. The plot twist of the story lies in this part. Black women against discrimination by making a book with Miss Eugenia Phelan. At the end, the book published and being the best seller book in town. It gives a new life for black women. Skeeter becomes a best-selling author and is offered a job as a copy editor's assistant at Harper & Row. In *The Help*, Skeeter Phelan clearly embraces the ideals and goals of the Women's Rights Movement as she tries to escape the stereotype life society expects her to lead by aspiring to become an author and journalist. Furthermore, Aibileen Clark and Minny Jackson represent the colored women of the 1960s as they try to improve their situation as colored maids in Mississippi by revealing the hardships of their lives to Skeeter.

4. CONCLUSION

The object of the research is *The Help* novel by Kathryn Stockkets. The researcher using Critical Race Feminism Theory to analyze the novel.

The researcher makes a conclusion based on the finding that has explained in the previous chapter. The researcher identify there are three indicators of race discrimination, it is conceptually as the following: (1) Race, (2) Gender, (3) Class. The indicators classified using Critical Race Feminism by Adrien Katherine Wing (1997, 2003). In analyzing the data, the researcher considered four tenets based on Critical Race Feminism in Katherine Wing's book (2003). The first tenet is CRF speaks to the uniqueness of women color, second is CRF concerned with the racial oppression, third is CRF focuses on anti-essentialism, and the fourth is CRF encourages multidisciplinary study.

Kathryn Stocketts as the author of *The Help* novel addressed about race discrimination because she wants to tell the reader about unity in diversity because Kathryn Stocketts was born and raised in Jackson, Mississippi. She grew up and lived in the same situation. This work is a form to stop discrimination to the black maids, so everybody in this world have the same right as a human. Kathryn tells the real events in her story, hopefully it helps to give information and raise reader's knowledge.

Based on the indicators of race discrimination that classified from CRF Theory on Katherine Wing's book (2003), there are some kinds of race discrimination to the black women. *The Help* novel tells some actions of discrimination based on race, gender and class indicators like discrimination in public situation, public facilities education, etc.

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