

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Discrimination is differentiating treatment from one another (Fulthoni, Arianingtyas, R., Aminah, S., 2009). According to Theodorson & Theodorson the difference in treatment can be caused by skin color, class or ethnicity, and can also be due to differences in gender, economy, religion, and so on. Discrimination is usually used to show the difference between 2 things. Social problems, namely racial discrimination problems that are often experienced by minority groups in a country still occur today. White people always think that their group is the best race compared to other races.

The social problem that still plagues American society is the problem of racial discrimination that is often experienced by minority groups. African-Americans account for a large proportion of American society (HOU Xia, 2019). Throughout the storyline of *The Help* movie, these black maids are often treated by their (white female) employers with degrading judgment and treatment (Kunsey, 2018). *The Help* movie takes the setting of the 1960s, at which time the issue of black civil rights equality became a highly debated issue, especially in the United States (Green & College, 1900). *The Help* movie tells a portrait of the lives of black African Americans who work as domestic servants and have lower degrees than whites.

The emancipation or equal rights of black people seems to be an issue that is interesting enough for film producers in the United States to become a theme in the films they raise, for example Tate Taylor who created *The Help* movie. *The Help* is a movie which is based on the novel of the same title by Kathryn Stockett in 2009, tells the story of the bitterness of racial discrimination in America. There are many movie that tell the life journey of blacks fighting for their lives from various forms of discrimination and racialization of whites, such as 12 years a slave, Selma, and Ali. *The Help* is a movie that raises the issue of slavery experienced by black people in America. This movie represents racial minorities, or in this context blacks are positioned or are subordinate. Blacks are servants of whites. It has even become part of American history that there is a problem of racism that leads to racial exploitation made by the majority race, in this case white people (Handayani, 2020). The issue of oppression is inextricably tied to the phenomenon of privilege. Racism not only disadvantages minority racial groups in society, but it also results in favoured groups (such as Whites) gaining societal power (Gill & Kalra, 2020).

Tate Taylor's film *The Help* premiered in Beverly Hills on August 9, 2011. The story revolves around the relationship with two black servants, Aibileen Clark and Minny Jackson.. In *The Help* movie, it is clear that the social class differences between white and black women are clear. The film take place during the Civil Rights Movement in 1963 Jackson, Mississippi. *The Help* movie was successful in attracting the attention of the audience and getting 4 nominations, even though it was criticized for offending the name of a race. This film highlights the discrimination and challenges that must be faced by African Americans.

The story in *The Help* movie tells the relationship of life between whites and blacks. This film begins with Aibileen's statement as a black maid who works at the house of Elizabeth Leefolt who is a white woman. Aibileen talked about her experience while working to care for Elizabeth's two year old child, but she was often asked to take care of the house. Although she often completes work she shouldn't, Aibileen doesn't get the extra pay she should.

Besides Aibileen, one of the maids highlighted was Aibileen's best friend, Minny Jackson. Minny works for Mrs Walters and her daughter, Hilly Holbrook. Hilly is told as a cruel mother and employer. She often treats her maids arbitrarily, Hilly's actions are an act of racial discrimination and are very visible. Even though Hilly is a manipulative woman, Hilly is entrusted with leading a group of women's socialites. Hilly insisted that black maids should not use the same bathroom as their employers, employers should make a special bathroom just like what Hilly did. One day, when there is a tornado that causes multiple fatalities, Minny uses the bathroom in the house and she is soon fired by Hilly. Hilly is a very racist woman, unlike Skeeter who doesn't discriminate against people based on their race or gender.

Skeeter is a beautiful writer who is not married because she wants to achieve high ideals. Skeeter is not in a hurry to get married like her friends, who on average already have children. Skeeter wants to be a woman who has a high level of education so that she can be a good mother for her children. Skeeter originally wrote a novel with the title Mississippi because Skeeter's mother, Charlotte, told her that Constantine (the maid who also looked after Skeeter as a child) stopped working, but Skeeter doesn't believe her and decides to write a book of interviews with the maids to explain their experiences.

After briefly refusing for fear of causing more trouble, Aibileen finally agrees to be interviewed by Skeeter. Skeeter's boss informs her that she needs more than two maid stories to write a book, but fears of violent reprisals or losing her job prevent the other maids from coming forward. Skeeter is confused about how to convince the other maids. After the shooting incident, many of the maids then wanted to share their stories for Skeeter to write about. Skeeter, Aibileen, and Minny are concerned that the maids' story may be revealed. *The Help* was extensively read by Jackson's black and white communities. The servants find it very helpful that Skeeter shares the proceeds from the sale of the book with them. They really love Skeeter and Skeeter too, they have a very strong relationship, like family.

"*The Help*" movie depicts not only the good relationship between the maid and Skeeter, but also the employer's discriminatory behavior towards the maid. The researcher uses the interconnectedness of life between individuals as a phenomenon that will be discussed in *The Help* movie. This is because researchers want to know what types of racial discrimination are shown in *The Help* movie. The writer is interested in analyzing *The Help* movie for that reason. This film is interesting to watch because it tells the story of how Eugenia "Skeeter" Phelan struggles to face challenges when writing a novel to fight for the rights of maids (black women).

That is the reason why the researcher chose *The Help* movie and did the analysis. Based on the illustration above, the researcher is interested in analyzing *The Help* movie using a sociological perspective. The reason for using a sociological perspective is because sociological theory focuses on the analysis of how society influences individual behavior and how individuals influence society. Therefore the researcher wants to analyze the research entitled "Racial Discrimination Reflected in *The Help* Movie: Sociological Approach".

1.2 Research Questions

Based on the explanation that has been described previously, the issue of racial discrimination will be investigated in this literature research. So to facilitate this research, the researcher formulates the research questions as follows:

1. What are the indicators of racial discrimination in *The Help* movie?
2. How was racial discrimination illustrated in *The Help* movie?
3. Why is racial discrimination discussed in *The Help* movie?

1.3 Objectives

This research was conducted with the following objectives:

1. To identify what indicators of racial discrimination are contained in *The Help* movie
2. To identify how racial discrimination is illustrated in *The Help* movie
3. To find out why racial discrimination is discussed in *The Help* movie

1.4 Significance

The benefit of this research are:

1. Theoretical benefit, namely, this research is an attempt to study and understand racial discrimination in film with a sociological view of literature.
2. Practical benefit, namely can add insight to the author and become a reference for other writers.

1.5 Research Paper Organization

The author divided her research paper into five chapters for this investigation. The first chapter serves as an introduction. This chapter includes a background, problem statement, study objective, study benefits, and research paper organization. The second chapter is a review of the literature. This chapter is divided into two sections: previous studies and underlying theory. The research method is covered in Chapter III. This chapter is divided into five sub-chapters: types of study, object of study, type of data and data source, technique of data collection, method of data analysis, and research validity. Finding and discussing are the topics of Chapter IV. This study's conclusions give specifics in the form of data descriptions and data analysis. The conclusion and proposal are found in Chapter 5, or the final chapter.