

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Novels, poetry, short stories, plays, and other forms of modern literature, such as movies, contemporary drama musicals, and songs, are examples of literary works created by authors with two purposes: to entertain and to educate the reader. Literature is also a tool for the reader to receive and obtain the certain information and knowledge. In literary theory, Wellek and Warren (1956) say that “literature presents life on a grand scale, social life, and the real world which is the object of literature” (p.94). In other words, social life is reflected through literature.

Literature is also used to express human experience through imaginative, beautiful, and carefully chosen words; It represents the state of society which the author finds himself based on the chosen setting, characterization of each character within the plot, conveying message, symbols, and it may also contain political viewpoint and propaganda. However literature has also arisen a challenging question to social-politic condition of human life Thus, those questions have made literature as a tool to pave a way for an expert, even a scientist, in analysing the human condition, breaking down what is wrong and what is right to the society, and learning from it.

Women have the same opportunities as men in the literary world, so it's not just men who can produce literary works. It explains that females enjoy the same freedoms and chances as males. If there is no movement promoting gender equality

to fight for women's justice, the status of women will not improve. When women and men share the same rights and opportunities, gender equality has occurred. Because of the feminist movement, women eventually gained political, social, and educational rights equal to those of men.

For a long time in The USA almost the majority of African – American or black people have experienced racism and discrimination, even after the slavery system have finally removed from the Law and protected by the thirteenth amendment. Nevertheless, the practice of racism and discrimination by the whites yet still can be found in every African – American aspects of life.

“The extent of reported discrimination across several areas of life suggests a broad pattern of discrimination against blacks in America, beyond isolated experiences. Black-white disparities exist on nearly all dimensions of experiences with public and private institutions, including health care and the police. The evidence of systemic discrimination suggests a need for more active institutional interventions to address racism in policy and practice.” (Bleich, 2019, p. 34-33)

Generally, the racism which white people do can cause an infinity loop of racism systemic social-political environment since it is often taught to children early in their childhood era. It does not only affect the children’s behaviour, but it also may change their point of view which changes their attitude socially, politically, and culturally towards the social norms. The black women have suffered more than most women in the USA for having different colour of skin. They have experienced different stages and episodes of racism in their life since likely from

their childhood era. This is by the numerous number of black people who claimed they were a victim of rape and sexual abuse. The white people, for a long time, have been judging them by having dreadful and unpleasant stereotypical towards them, such as black women are having bad attitude, immoral, sexually loose, using profanity, and many more. The sexism that black male do to the black women has been existed long ago since slavery era. They see them as an inferior. They keep themselves in quiet every time they see black women are being raped or abused by their white master. Even after the slavery era, the number of abusing and discrimination which is done by black males to the black women still has not changed. Generally, the black males tend to leave their women after knowing that the women are pregnant or after the baby is born. Due to those events, the black women will raise their children as a single parent. "Black men may be victims of racial discrimination, but gender discrimination makes them exploiters and oppressors of women" (Hooks, 2001, p. 19).

Racist incidents occur not only in real life but also in works of fiction like novels. Many authors have incorporated this phenomenon into a novel that readers will enjoy. Kathryn Stockett's best-selling book "The Help" was one of the books that addressed racism toward race. Author Kathryn was raised in Mississippi and is a native of the United States. She earned a degree in creative writing and English from Alabama University. After graduating from college, she relocated to New York City and spent nine years working in a magazine's publishing and marketing department.

She had never written a book before, and "The Help," her first novel, was released in 2009.

The Novel entitled the Help by Kathryn Stockett tells the story of black women in Jackson, Mississippi, USA. Minny Jackson and Aibileen are two friends who Experience numerous numbers of class discrimination and racism as maids in Jackson. They both share the same struggle as black women who work for the white people. Skeeter, in this novel, is also an important character that has a huge role in this novel. She wants to write the social-condition of black women in how they work for the white people. Those three characters make a unique connection of how they help each other in changing the circumstances of black people, especially the black women in Jackson. A black woman's experience as a woman in the South of America is depicted in the novel The Help by an American author. During the early 1960s, when the equal opportunity movement headed by Dr. Martin Luther King was active, it describes racial and gender discrimination in Jackson City, Mississippi. White men are held in high regard in society, whereas white women are regarded as life's dependencies and people of color are regarded as untouchables who trample on white people.

The book describes the altercation between the white and black female servants as a bloody and brutal protest against class oppression, racial discrimination, and gender discrimination.

In this case, I use Marxist Feminism in order to analyze the novel, and to achieve the aim of this research.

1.2 Limitation of the Problem

This analysis focuses on evaluating Minny Jackson's and Aibileen's black feminist value by using the Black Feminism Criticism theory by Bell Hooks to analyze the fundamental challenge which is faced by the Black Women in the novel.

1.3 Research Questions

1. What kinds of discrimination are faced by the Black Women and in the novel?
2. How is capitalism be the cause of Black women's suffering?
3. How do the main characters struggle to help the black women community?

1.4 Objectives of the Research

This research aims to reveal how capitalism and patriarchal society exploited the Black Women and Black community in the *Help* novel and how they struggle towards the circumstances. In order to achieve this, I use steps as follows:

1. Identifying and revealing what kind of exploitation which is faced by the Black Women.
2. Identifying and explaining the Black Women's struggle in the novel.
3. To describe the lower class struggles against upper class' oppression in capitalist society in novel *The Help* by Kathryn Stockett.