

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Research

The phenomenon of discrimination is the thing that makes harmony in the world become dispersed. Harmony is useful as a means of prosperity and justice for the whole society. Without discrimination, it will create peace and prosperity in society. Discrimination can be defined as the differential treatment of individuals, based on their membership in a particular group as argued by Brewer (Bodenhausen and Richeson. Psychology: Prejudice, Stereotyping, and Discrimination, 2010: 343). Discrimination could represent the system in the society that considers different race, social status, gender, or belief to be ranked as inherently superior or inferior to each other. The discrimination actions itself could be in a different way but with the horrible impact. It could be physically and emotionally impacted. The physically impact such as violence causes injury and murder. While verbally cause emotional impact such as; sadness, depression and guilty. One of the discrimination issues that are still a phenomenon and still exists is discrimination against skin color or called racial discrimination.

Discrimination still becomes a complicated social problem. According to Senator Trent Lott, “The wounds of our history of slavery and segregation have not yet healed.” (Skillen. “Ending Racial Discrimination”, 2003). This

idea also support by Fairchild as a professor of psychology and black studies at Pitzer College in Claremont, California also has the same opinion, he said “Racism is a current event; only its expression is more disguised and subtle.” (Fairchild. Modern-Day Racism Masks Its Ugly Head, 2000: 20). From that point, the writer believes that racial discrimination is still alive in society. The writer thoughts that many people are not aware of how much racism still exists in our school, workforces, and anywhere else where social lives are occurring. According to Professor Heath and Cheung writes, “Race or color is a major factor in discrimination because of unequal treatment” (Ethnic Penalties in the Labour Market. Employers and Discrimination, 2006). The different of color make some racial groups are superior to others, that make unequal treatment such as white to black people because white believes they are superior than black. Furthermore, racial discrimination later impacted class discrimination, indicating the plight of black female with low social status in obtaining justice in the 1960s in the southern part of America. So at this time black female as domestic servants who became the main victims of discrimination and injustice.

In this research, the writer uses a novel in 2009 titled The Help by an American female novelist, Kathryn Stockett, as the object. This novel focuses on black female domestic servants as the victims of discrimination and their struggle to voice their suffering on it. This novel is inspired by Stockett’s relationship with black female who cared for her as a child. Besides white and

black relationship, this novel focuses on African – American live their life in an oppressive society under Jim Crow Laws and the stereotype of white that blacks are somehow expected to be homogeneous people, whose characteristics are skewed to the negative. Their protagonists struggle against white people's stereotypes to oppressed black community, with their own distorted perception of themselves. Furthermore, this novel consists of three female narrators, namely: Minny and Aibileen, two black female domestic servants. Then white people, Miss Skeeter as a journalist. This novel dominated by female characters about the voice of black and written by American female author, therefore the writer does this research by using discourse analysis to conduct the Stockett's idea in her work which is portraying black's struggle to voice their suffering on discrimination.

1.2 Identification of the Problem

Black female as minority groups are often discriminated by dominant societies (white). Thus, Stockett in The Help highlights this issue to be the mainly part of the story. The black female in The Help is told as domestic servants of white's family. The problem that needs to be identified is about black female experiences and their suffering against discrimination. In identifying the writer analyze white female discrimination action toward black female on the story, the writer sees the way Stockett depicts the situation to look after the idea that Stockett reflects in her novel about female's struggle against discrimination on three female narrators. Meanwhile, those protagonist

black female characters struggle to escape from the discrimination doing by whitefemale.

1.3 Research Question

Based on the problems above, in this research the writer concerns to answer the following questions:

1. What are black female's experiences as white's domestic servants reflected in The Help?
2. How does black female's struggle methods against discrimination?

1.4 The Scope of the Research

In order to make this research more specific, the writer focused on female characters in The Help. That is why the scope of this research are two things:

1. Black female's experiences as white's domestic servants.
2. Black female's struggle methods against discrimination.

1.5 The Objective of the Research

In this research, the writer studies about black experiences in the racist era which occurs because of the stereotype of white female employers toward black female domestic servants in the novel which is Stockett shared. This study mainly analyzes about the female's struggle on sharing their voice

against discrimination that fought by three female narrators which one of them is a white female. The aim of this study is to collect the idea of Stockett in The Help about black females suffering and struggling against discrimination in her perspective.

1.6 Review of Previous Studies

The writer requires some information by literary critics in their articles and theses which related to the writer's topic and used as sources. There are various types of research relate to the discrimination. First, the researchers below has observed the novel The Help which has been analyzed by two researchers. These research also have the same topic about discrimination. Suastifa (2011) studied of the racial discrimination in The Help between black and white people in America. She proves that black people become the victim of racial discrimination in many aspects, not only physically but also in public services, such as the area of housing, public transportation, hospital, library, education and also justice. Khairunnisa (2015), has done her research about the opposition of Kathryn Stockett to racial discrimination in the 1960s. Her mainly analysis is about discrimination. She claims that Stockett in The Help supports black community to oppose the racial discrimination in Jackson, Mississippi during the 1960s.

Other researchers addressed their research on black struggle to fight racial discrimination on different literary work but also in America, such as

Budiman (2013), he explains family conflict that happened in the character of Charles Bon in *Absalom, Absalom!* It takes place in Jefferson, Mississippi, Southern America around the Civil War. He proves that Charles Bon as the victim of the refusal of black people in his family life. Otherwise, Umulkhulsum (2011) in his research sets out to trace the origin of racism in America and try to expose the horrible experience that black slaves went through in novel Black Boy. He concludes that in the novel there is still a tone of hope at the end of everything because white's effort to oppress blacks has failed. Blacks never stopped in their protest to be treated as humans, they tried to make their impact felt in the society and at the end of the day.

Therefore, from those researchers above, the writer has found many studies related to this research. Although, they have the same object or the same topic, the writer has not found any study similar to the research that the writer has done. The way the researchers do their research is different each other. So, the writer will also do this research through a different way from them. By using discourse analysis, the writer will analyze the portrayed of the discrimination in female's lives in The Help and the Stockett's idea about black female's struggle against discrimination from the three female narrators of the novel.

1.7 Theoretical Framework

In recent decades the discourse has been used with increasing frequency and with new kinds of meaning, reflecting in part the effect on the

critical vocabulary of work done within and across the boundaries of various discipline: linguistics, philosophy, literary criticism, history, psychoanalysis and sociology. At another level discourse analysis provided a global model for literature itself, one that describes literary works not as iconic objects set apart from a world of intention and effect, but as a socially determined communicative practice between reader and writer, and, as such analogous to other forms of communication (Fowler, Roger, Literature as Social Discourse, 1981).

From a different perspective, discourse is a key term in the writings of the French philosopher and historian, Michel Foucault. Furthermore, Fowler stated that:

The place of discourse in Foucault's own work can be crudely described through two concern. The first is with discourse as a historical phenomenon. The second concern, it has already indicated in Foucault's attitude towards the concepts of truth, is a radical scepticism about many basic assumptions in intellectual history, literary criticism and linguistic (Literature as Social Discourse, 1981)

Thus, in literary criticism discourse according to Foucault is placed through two concern; historical phenomenon and radical scepticism. The analysis of discourse is a matter of research into the historical conditions which permitted, but did not guarantee, its appearance about many basic assumptions.

Foucault has unpacked and criticized mostly about authority. The authority is a direct result of separation. It is born when there is inequality or

imbalance, and encourages discrimination. It is means, power is an internal situation because of differences. The distinction is established and runs at workplace, family, institutions and various groupings. The distinction forms a line of local confrontation of various oppositions. Because power is usually described as something that oppresses, prohibits or limits. (Foucault, Michel. 1977: 88). Foucault's important component of his conception discourse is a denial and a critique. These are expressive activities either in the sense that they express emotions and ideas "within" the individual, or in the sense that acts of expression, and notably acts of literary expression in written or spoken communication. (Weedon, Christ. 1987:108).

In short, Foucault says every discourse exists within a given body of social discourse and no claim that social discourse is a truth and there is denial through spoken or written. Thus, the writer considers that the theory is appropriate to the issue that the writer analyzes about black female's struggle as domestic servants to voice their suffering on discrimination shown in Stockett's The Help through storytelling and writing. By applying this perspective, the Stockett's idea on female's struggle on discrimination which occurs in The Help could be revealed, as Foucault's claims that every discourse encounters a counter – discourse.

1.8 The Method of the Research

In conducting this research, the writer applies three methods: the method of collecting data, the method of research analysis, and presenting the result.

1.8.1 Collecting Data

The writer collects the data from all information related and relevant to female's struggle on discrimination. In collecting data, there consist of two sources: primary source and secondary sources. The primary source is taken from literary work itself in the novel by Kathryn Stockett's The Help. Then, the secondary source is all information related to this research taken from books and articles, the biography of Kathryn Stockett, browsing the internet about the history of Southern America especially Jackson, Mississippi. The data collected further on black female's experience on racist era during the 1960s and black female's effort to gain equity in Kathryn Stockett's The Help.

1.8.2 Analyzing Data

The writer using discourse analysis to find black female's experience in living their life during the 1960s that happen in The Help between white toward black female in 1960s of Jackson, Mississippi. First, the writer sees the relation between woman – woman relations happen in The Help in order to focus on the female characters that dominate the story to see their experiences on discrimination between white female toward black female characters in the novel. Second, the writer investigates by using discourse analysis in order to find the idea of the female author about female's voice their suffering on

discrimination shared in The Help struggled by three narrators of the novel; a white and two black female. The case serves in the novel are occurred on white female and black female in the domestic area. Start from here, the writer considers black female struggle to voice their experiences during the 1960s in Jackson, Mississippi. The technique of analysis the writer uses is descriptive analysis by interpreting the novel to find the intention of the Kathryn Stockett as the author of The Help.

1.8.3 Presenting the Result

The last step is presenting the result of analysis. In presenting the data, the descriptive method is one of the important parts in order to comprehend the novel since the research is a qualitative one. According to Bogdan in his book stated that, “[...]Qualitative research is descriptive; the collected data is in the form of words or pictures rather than numbers. The written result of the research contains quotation from the data to illustrate and substantiate the presentations[...]” (Bogdan, Robert C. Qualitative Research Education: An Introduction to Theory and Method. Boston: Allyn and Bacon, Inc. 1982: 28). Therefore, it shows that the data which the writer collects are deals with description, the writer exploring the issues and understanding the phenomenon through the words of the story in the novel rather than numbers or pictures.