

RACISM IN “THE HELP” MOVIE BY TATE TAYLOR (A SOCIOLOGICAL APPROACH)

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Abstract

This research discusses the discrimination by white people to black people in “The Help” Movie. Black people and white people is separated by many rules that makes black people is intimidate, so racism is still growing up until generations. This research aims to analyze the history, concept or types of racism and the struggle that also does by black people in “The Help” Movie. This research used descriptive qualitative methods. Researcher used the Sociological approach to identify and to find out the types of racism contained in The Help movie. In addition, from the result of the analysis, it was found that there are 4 types or concept of racism in “The Help” Movie, such as the internalized, interpersonal, institutional and societal types by using Paradies and William’s theory. The last result of analysis, the researcher also found the Struggle that does by the black people in “The Help” Movie.

Keywords: *Movie, Racism, Sociological Approach.*

INTRODUCTION

Racism is the ideology of racial domination where the biological superiority or culture of a racial group is used to justify the social position of the other racial groups (Wilson, 1999). However, for some people racism is only a history that has happened in America for a long time (conflict between white and black people). But, in fact when we explore and pay more attention on it, then we will see some people who oppress each other or discriminate against each other. Either, it hurts each other's race, skin color and culture.

We should know that racism in United States is still growing. This can be seen from the enactment of Jim Crow’s law, where the law regulates “*separate but equal*” for black people. This law set all of public facilities in America, such as restaurants, bathrooms, churches, barbers, nurses and even prisons are also been separated between black and white people. Those who try to oppose Jim Crow’s law will be punished through court and *lynching* law. The lynching law

itself is a death penalty without trial and carried out by all of law enforcements or racist organizations such as the Ku Klux Klan. But with the help of the *National Association for Advancement of Colored People* (NAACP), the Jim crow's law has been ended and in 1968 the US Supreme Court said that all of law that still prevailing separations at that time were not in accordance with the constitution (Ware, 2013).

We can see how much black people treated unfair from the government. And because of it, *The Help* movie was a great movie to remind us about how cruel racism is. *The Help* movie is a fiction movie that based on the history in Southern America in 1960's. This movie directed by Tate Taylor, was a movie that appointed by a novel wrote by Kathryn Stockett. This movie is talking or showing us about a discriminate that happened in 1960's by white people. If you are Black or any other racial minorities, this movie will make you understand the struggle of our peoples today. Just like in this movie, there is much script that shows the discrimination between White and Black people. For instance, when a white people who named Hilly wants to urinate, but she is still refuse to use the toilet in Elizabeth's house who was her friend, It is because all of toilets was used by negro. We can see that this movie show a lot of racism, and it based from the history of Africa-America. And at last, the researcher hopes that this research will makes a new beginning for the reader to not discriminate each other. And we should know that racism is must be counteracting the tendency of racism since childhood. Because it is will be affect the new generation, then racism will always being a culture, not in an environment but it is in their self.

The reason why the researcher analyzed about racism is, because the researcher realized that racism is not begun from the environment. But it starts by themselves as the way they are thinking about something or the way they are judging the other people. According to the researcher, the racism is in everyone. Although it is not verbally expressed, and it's only done by a person through the gaze, still it will make the other person feel offended or perhaps even humbled. We should know more about racism, include the definition, the history, types of racism and the struggle of black people who experienced discrimination.

Therefore, we will not being confused about what racism is and why it is happening in our environment, but did not seeing by us. The most important thing that should we know that is, the object of this research is “The Help” movie which is a true story that happened in America (Mississippi) the conflict of Black and White people. The researcher thought that people should know The Help movie is really happened and it is not just a story. But it is a real history that filmed by Taylor to remind people that racism is not just a small problem. But it is a big problem that can make someone depressed, felt discriminate or even caused a death. So that is why, the researcher is expected that from this film can remind us about the dangers of racism, and by this research the reader can really understand the adverse effects that will occur if we intense to do racism. Therefore, the researcher hopes this research can be useful for readers and for the future researchers.

RESEARCH METHOD

In this research, the researcher analyzed the research by using *Descriptive Qualitative*. Descriptive method is a method of research to examine the status of an object, a condition, a system of thought, an event or even status of a group of men.

According to Gall, et.el (1996) qualitative research is an investigation that based on the assumption of the individuals that construct a social reality in the form of individuals. This is also constructing the social reality in the form of meaning and interpretation, and lest this construction tends to be temporary and situational. In this aspect the researcher is interested to analyze how is the racism in a movie titled “The Help” by using Paradise and Williams (2008) theory about racism.

The first process that does by the researcher is taking the data from a movie script and also the scene that focuses on five concepts that is internalized, interpersonal, institutional, societal racism and also about the struggle of black people. And then, the researcher put the data by describing the events in a descriptive paragraph and also describing the conversation that took from the script. After that the researcher makes a final conclusion.

RESEARCH FINDING AND DISCUSSION

1. Internalized Racism

Data 01

This event happened when Aibileen was interviewed by a white people in her house. She is interviewed about her life. Is she knows that she will be a maid when she grows up or not. It is a show that black people have doctrine in their self that they will be the same as they parents when they grow up.

An unseen woman interviews Aibileen.

Woman : Did you know as a girl, growing up, that one day you're gonna be a maid?

Aibileen : yes, I'm here. I did.

Woman : and you knew it because?

*Aibileen : my momma was a maid. My grandmomma was a house slave.
(in minute 02:24:46 >> 02:24:29)*

This part is showing us that Aibileen believe that every black people is has no great future or they are can't have a future like what they want. It is because in every generation they will be a maid for white people. This data is explaining the internalized racism that is strengthen with the theory by Jones (2002) that internalized racism is a form of oppression and harassment by white people and has unknowingly been accepted by black people. And it is connected with data on this analysis, such as when Aibileen felt oppressed by not being able to determine his future but he had accepted the oppression.

At the opening of the movie, a woman who interviewed Aibileen named Skeeter. She is a woman who worked in Jackson journaling, and she has a job to write down the answer of a letter by Miss Myrna is about the experience of black people as they are becoming a maid for white people.

Skeeter asks Aibileen to help her, but Skeeter asks her first time, she was rejected it because she is too scared. But, Skill is to reassure her until Aibileen agreed of it. Then they are doing the interview by clandestinely in Aibileen's house.

Data 02

Aibileen pours the tea into Skeeter's glass, but she is spilt the tea in the saucer and she is wipes it quickly. The reason Aibileen spilt the tea is because she is nervous about white people coming to her house for first time.

*Aibileen : I never had a white person in my house before.
(in minute 01:44:26 >> 01:44:10)*

In this part, Skeeter is going to Aibileen's house to do the interview. Aibileen try to be nice, even she is felt so nervous. Then, Aibileen try to serve the tea to Skeeter's glass.

Skeeter is the first 'white people' guest in Aibileen's house. As a black people, Aibileen is too nervous, and it is because of the psychological problems. Black people felt intimidated by white people because they believe that white people and black people are in the same social place as a crime, and it happens by itself. Aibileen's attitude shows us that black people have accepted that their social status is different which results they are feeling inferior to being with white people (Maulina, 2018).

In addition, the racism in this movie that is between black people and white people, not just one. This movie will show us about other women who are trying to against white people. She is Aibileen's close friend, named Minny. And because of the white people, he is getting fired.

2. Interpersonal Racism

Data 03

In Mississippi, there are too many rules that should be obeyed by black people. And this part will show us about one of the rules becoming so intimidating black people.

This is when Hilly begins squirming in her seat it is obviously making a point to Elizabeth. Then she asked Hilly to go to the bathroom but Hilly did not want it and Missus Walters who was the mother of Hilly explained the reason Hilly didn't want to use the toilet in Elizabeth's house. After hearing that Elizabeth told Hilly to use Elizabeth and her husband's toilet but hilly refused and said some bad word that made Aibileen feel so sad.

Missus Walters : Oh, she's just upset the Nigra uses the guest bath, and so we.

(Elizabeth quickly turns to Aibileen)

Elizabeth : Aibileen, go check on Mae Mobley (Aibileen disappears. Elizabeth leans into Hilly)

Elizabeth : Just go use mine and Raleigh's

Hilly : If Aibileen uses the guest bath, I'm sure she uses yours too

Elizabeth : SHE DOES NOT!

(in minute 02:11:21 >> 02:10:53)

As one of white people who hate black people, Hilly will never use the same toilets with the black people. She will do anything to make black people obey the rules to use another toilet in Mississippi. Then, to do it she is starting to tell her friend Elizabeth about a disease had by black people.

This illustrates Hilly's suspicion of black people that can transmit disease. As explained by Jones (2000) that prejudice and discrimination is used by someone to suspect, supervise and not respect those of different races.

Data 04

Hilly starts to make a doctrine to her friend Elizabeth about different topics between black and white people. And she asks Elizabeth to tell Raleigh to her husband to make them a new bathroom for Aibileen, their maid.

Hilly : Tell Raleigh every penny spends on a colored's bathroom, he'll get back in spades when you sell. It's just plain dangerous. They carry different diseases than we do.

(in minute 02:10:43 >> 02:10:31)

Then, because of the doctrine that told by Hilly, finally it scared Elizabeth. She is thinking about all the thing that told by Hilly. And choose to make a new bathroom for Aibileen as a black people. This illustrates that racial domination can be seen from interactions and practices in everyday life that are often carried out openly or veiled in common sense and habits (Desmon and Mustafa Emirbayer, 2009)

3. Institutional and societal racism

Data 05

After Aibileen is ignoring Skeeter about the interview, she went to her house. She is talking with herself about every rules that been followed by black people.

Aibileen : "No person shall require any white female to nurse in wards or rooms... in which Negro men are placed.

Aibileen : Books shall not be interchangeable between the white and colored schools but shall continue to be used by the race first using them...

Aibileen : No colored barber shall serve as a barber to white women or girls.

Aibileen sits in front of a mirror and tends to her wig.

Aibileen : Any person printin', publishin' or circulating written matter urgin' for public acceptance of social equality between whites and negroes is subject to imprisonment.

(in minute 01:48:58 >> 01:48:16)

These are all was the segregation rules that been followed by black people. These rules are called as Jim Crow's Laws. They are not doing things that are also doing by white people. Everything that can be doing by people is, being a maid in white people.

According to Jones (2000) institutional racism is the difference in access to medical facilities, wealth, organizational infrastructure, representation in government and media control. Here is described the separation of public facilities and media control. Where everyone is urgently required to publish and circulate written matter for public acceptance of social equality between whites and Negroes will be punished.

Data 06

Aibileen told the chronology of his son's death to Skeeter. His son died while working at a factory. He fell and was hit by a truck so that his lungs were destroyed. The white foreman put his son's body in the back of the truck and took him to the hospital specifically for blacks. Arriving at the hospital the foreman left and left him alone. Feeling not getting good care, Aibileen took her child home to home who finally died in front of Aibileen's eyes.

Aibileen : They killed my son.

Skeeter looks up in shock. Minny tries to console Aibileen.

Aibileen : He fell carrying two by fours at the mill. Truck run over him, crushed his lungs.

Minny : Aibileen...

Aibileen : That white foreman threw his body on the back of a truck. Drove to the colored hospital and dumped him there and honked the horn. There was nothin' they could do... so I brought my baby home, laid

him down on that sofa right there. He died right in front of me. Just twenty-four years old, Miss Skeeter. Best part of a person's life. Anniversary of his death come every year and I can't breathe. But to y'all it's just another day of bridge.
(in minute 01:17:24 >> 01:16:12)

According to MacPherson,1999,in Griffith,et.al,2007, that those who carry out institutional racism can be seen from attitudes and behaviors that lead to unwitting prejudice and discrimination, ignorance of racist stereotypes that can be detrimental people or groups of racial minorities. Here it is clear how the white foreman helped his Aibileen son to be taken to the hospital but unconsciously the foreman remained racist because he put his Aibileen son in the back of the truck and took him to the black hospital and left him there without care.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

Based on all of findings and discussions, the researcher concluded this data that has been collected and also classified is associated with some existing theory and analyzed by using descriptive qualitative data.

In addition, the history of white people and black people is reflected with the movie that analyzed by the researcher titled *The Help* directed by Tate Taylor, based in the book of Kathryn Stockett about the segregated life of Southern America in the 1960's and the abuse faced by Black women working as maids for rich White families.

The researcher also concluded that, all of the theories and concepts that used in this research about racism are all reflected in *The Help* movie. The focus analysis on this research is only about the internalized, interpersonal, institutional, societal racism and also about the struggle of black people by using a Sociological approach and theory from Paradies and Williams (2008).

"*The Help*" movie, racism has been internalized by all black people. It shows that all of black people believe that they do not have the right to determine the future and have a boundary between them and white people. Internalized racism is also included in the Symbolic Interactionism Theory. It is clear that those in the black group believe and act according to the meaning of the social status given by the white group to them where their social status is lower than the

white people. Interpersonal racism, White people who feel that they belong to a dominant group discriminate openly against those who come from non-dominant black groups. This can be seen when two or more people from the same racial group oppress black people who are none other than their helpers. In sociology theory, interpersonal racism is also included in the Social Conflict Theory because it explains about how dominant groups use their power to exploit non-dominant groups who have no power in society. Institutional and Societal racism, in this part, racism is not only done by individuals or groups but racism is enforced in an institutional and structured manner. This can be seen in several government institutions that are pro-racism by imposing a separation between white and black facilities. Institutional racism and Societal racism are included in the Structural Functionalism Theory. In institutional and societal racism, these sections of society constitute institutions that practice or impose racial inequality and segregation of facilities which have a negative impact on society, especially society from non-dominant racial circles.

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