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*English Language*

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***On The Nature of Prejudice in “The Help” by Kathryn STOCKETT:***

**A Socio-Psychological Perspective**

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## Dedication

This humble work is wholeheartedly dedicated to:

*The memory of my deceased Father* may ALLAH have mercy on his soul.

*The memory of my beloved Uncle Djamel* Whose loving spirit sustains me still.

*My beloved Family* whom I adore immeasurably.

*My Mother and Grandparents* that raised me to make it to this day.

*My Aunt Fadila and Naima* and *My uncles Abdellatif, Abdesalem, Ali, Miloud, Yousef* who gave me moral, spiritual, emotional support and being my ultimate savior.

**My beloved** cousins **Zineb, My little Razane, Salma, Hind, Ilef, kaouther, Fatima, Tasnim, Selsabile.**

Lastly, I want to thank *myself* for doing all this hard work and for never quitting.

## **Declaration**

I, undersigned, do hereby declare that this dissertation has been carried out by me as a partial fulfillment for the Master's degree in English Literature and Civilization under the guidance and supervision of Mr.Sedrati Yasser, Faculty of Letters and Languages, English Languages and Literature Department, Mohamed Khider University of Biskra, Algeria.

I further declare that the interpretations put forth in this thesis are based on my own readings, understanding and examination of the original texts. The reported findings that I have made use of are duly acknowledged at the respective place. Also, I declare that this work is not published anywhere in any form.

**Fares Assia**

**Date: 22/06/2022**

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## Abstract

Kathryn Stockett debut book *The Help* describes the ubiquitous problem of Prejudice in the life of African Americans, who were discriminated, dehumanized and humiliated by their white masters in the 1960's in Jackson, Mississippi in The United State. This Study is designed as a thematic, qualitative, descriptive and analytical research. It aims at analyzing and describing the main characters attitude from Socio-Psychological perspective, and how prejudice and racism are manifested in Kathryn Stockett's novel .Thus, what are the Socio-psychological motives that lead to the emergence of prejudice in Kathryn Stockett's novel? In addition, how they are manifested? To meet the purpose, the research is designed by applying Gordon W. Allport's Theory of Prejudice and Discrimination, and Freudian Psychoanalysis criticism, and Feminist Theory as a theoretical framework of the study. The findings reveals that discrimination and prejudice is rooted within the society and its deep-seated socio-cultural disease fostered by racial hegemony and intergroup prejudice. However, it indicates also the oppression of black women and gender inequality they faced from white housewives and black men at the same time.

**Keywords:** The Help, Prejudice, Discrimination, Socio-Psychological, African Americans, Black Women.

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# **General Introduction**



“ I learned that racism, like most systems of oppressions, isn't about bad people doing terrible things to people who are different from them but instead is a way of maintain power for certain groups at the expense of others”.

Alicia Garza, *the purpose of power: how we come together when we fall apart*, 344.

Prejudice, racism and discrimination have existed since the light of dawn in America, since slavery was introduced in the United State after 1619; white Americans have treated African Americans as a plight. This fact demonstrates that the United State has a deep issue of interaction between white and black Americans.

However, several challenges confronted African Americans in the early 1960's; they have been shifted from slavery to segregation, which was widespread in the USA, particularly in the south; they were dehumanized and discriminated and they were deprived of their rights as human being and American Citizens. This racial segregation created a new age or a second wave of white supremacy, resulting the emergence of the Jim Crow Law, which was the most crucial laws of segregation for colored people. After a great deal of suffering and challenges, these laws were gradually extracted and many political movements emerged as Civil Right Movement to abolish racial segregation and strengthened the position of African Americans in the society.

In January 31, 1865, the 13<sup>th</sup> Amendment abolished slavery, when Congress passed a law in the United State Constitution. However, slavery and prejudice may appear to be outdated, but the bitter truth is that it persists to these days and it will always be noted as a black spot in The USA archives and records.

The strong belief of white supremacy has taken new forms to hide its existence but people's value is driven by their life experience. As a result, individuals in American society are significantly influenced by their society and psychology. Many authors return

to such periods to alter the image of their race and themselves. On the other hand, Kathryn Stockett's *The Help* depicted the truth and raised the topic of racism in Southern United State, portraying the real relationship between colored and white people.

*The Help* is a novel set-in late summer of 1962's in Jackson, Mississippi, about the lives of black maids who were segregated by their masters. Segregation and racism were not only in Mississippi, but also in the whole Southern state of America where colored maids have lived under white folk mercy. However, the novel not only depicts white masters' discrimination against black maids, but also focuses on prejudicial treatment of black Americans of all ages and from all areas of life.

African American slaves were important for the hard work and plantations, but the number of colored people has become triple then the whites, this was a vital reason for white populations to put the colored folk under their wings and grip on their poor soul for their own protection and their economy. In other words, the growth of slavery and the attendance of the slaves in the national create nervousness for the uncolored Mississippian.

The novel is a work of fiction based on true stories, but it is closely and realistically related to a number of social and political issues, such as the description of the early Civil Right movements and the interaction between the colored maids and their white employers, which is sprinkled throughout the story. The story of three dynamic women in *The Help* who deals with the issue of Segregation. Feminism and Race relations take place in Jackson, Mississippi, between 1962 and 1964's. The novel is told through the eyes of three main characters, all of whom are females.

Miss Skeeter Phelan, an ambitious and well-educated white woman, and two-colored maids, Aibileen and Minny. Those women will join hands for a clandestine project that will put all of them in danger; they have grown tired of living within the lines that

defines their town; and they have taken a stand against the inhumane conditions of the colored maids in *The South*.

Throughout the novel, those three women are recording down many blacks' maids' stories about their interactions with Jackson's white families, the black's maids have been living a stressful life since the collection of stories was published. They were terrified by their boss's reactions. Indeed, every white woman in Jackson town knew which character she was in the book, but they could not react because they would be revealed and known by their terrible actions for their maids, especially Miss Hilly, who knew the writer but couldn't protest because she would be the funniest part of the book with her chocolate pie. She has struggled to persuade Jackson society that the stories are not in Jackson, and that she must maintain the same image that people used to see her in order to keep her high position in society.

Miss Skeeter, Aibileen, and Minny bear fruit at the end of the book. Each of them has realized their ambitions. Skeeter has applied for a new job at *Harper's & Row* Magazine in New York and has left the town. Aibileen had decided to quit her job and begin writing. Minny has finally found her way; she had taken her children and abandoned her abusive husband in favor of her sister Octavia because she was financially secure.

Thus, Kathryn Stockett's *The Help* was perceived controversially, having a white author and a white protagonist led to controversial discussions among the book audience, which was divided into pro and against. Despite the fact, many researchers have tried to analyze both the work and racism in general, but no one have linked prejudice and the latter into one study and from Socio-psychological perspective.

The topic of racism in Kathryn Stockett's *The Help* has been talked about in much research thesis since its publication in 2009. One of which is a thesis submitted to the

University of Baghdad entitled: “*The Suffering of Afro-American Maids in Kathryn Stockett the Help*”, Hanan Abbass Hussein explained the color segregation and its effects on African American maids in the Mississippi according to Kathryn Stockett *The Help*. Abbass claimed that the ill treatment and negligence the maids receive from their masters have affected their personality somehow, which led to their suffering. Living in a complicated society where struggle takes control in everyday life, leads them eventually to freeing themselves through writing a book about their chronicles in their white masters houses to feel somehow equal to them. Throughout the dissertation, the researcher is concerned with racism and how it effects the different characters in the book, leading them to take important decisions in their lives. Skeeter’ the white character’ is mentioned as the savior and hero who goes against his own race to say the truth, and stands with what is right, but the issue of motives that lead Skeeter to be anti-racist is not tackled by this research.

Another study is research submitted to Ain Shams University of Egypt entitled: “*Anger in Kathryn Stockett’s The HELP*”, by Doha Al-Sayd Mohamed the latter explained anger in Kathryn Stockett *the Help* as the cure of racism, due to the fact that it is a powerful tool even though refused by most people and by the society itself for causing problems and troubles, but the right kind of it could indeed help the person reach the impossible. For the researcher, racism is the mother of all sins, but anger could be the answer to decrease it, as most of the characters in the book are angry with someone or something. She clearly explains that anger cannot be always destructive and that it can be instructive, for in the case of *The Help* it is anger which leads to the creation of that book by the narrators, which will help set them free from segregation. Doha also thinks that the author of the book herself is angry at the American society that manifests racism.

In a 2017 article published in *The International Journal of Humanities and Social Development Research* of the Islamic Azad University of Iran, Fatemah Aziz Mohammadi examined Kathryn Stockett's *The Help* through the lens of Patricia Hill Collin's view of black feminism. In the book, the author emphasized the oppression of black females, sexism, racism, and social differences. For her, the author demonstrated to the reader what is like to see the world through the eye of a black female who is discriminated against in two ways: being black and being a woman. She also tried to list the different stereotypes and images that are introduced and shaped by the racist society for the sole purpose of oppressing black females, which are prevalent through the novel. The author shifted the focus of this novel's study from racism to something more profound, which is the double suffrage of the black females in comparison to that of the black males and then to the white females.

Departing from the review above, it is noticed that the issue of Segregation, Racism and Feminism has been discussed separately in many works. However, to our knowledge no previous works are focused on the connectivity of these concepts in the novel; the gap that will be addressed in this research is the motives that lead to segregation, racism, and the socio-psychological effects on African-Americans maids in South America. Therefore, this academic study offer a new perspective of the novel "*The Help*" that linked between segregation and feminism and racism from socio-psychological and psychoanalysis perspective. This thesis attempts to describe the prejudice and segregation and the effects on its victims.

This research will be based on Gordon W. Allport's Theory of Prejudice, as well as Freudian Psychoanalysis approach and Feminist Theory, and it will be Thematic, qualitative, descriptive, and analytical in nature. In *The Help*, the researcher will discuss the socio-psychological motives that contribute to Prejudice, as well as how prejudice is

manifested through the characters behavior. This dissertation, On the other hand, will be divided into three chapters, the first of which will govern the theoretical framework of the study. The second chapter will discuss the author's and novel literary and historical background. The final chapter will examine the novel characters and some historical events through the lens of Allport's prejudice theory.

The first chapter in our literary study will include the theoretical groundwork that will cover, introduce, and simplify the theories fitted. This chapter will be divided into three sections. The first section will be titled as Theory of prejudice Gordon W. Allport's and it will cover the theory's background as well as the author's sociological ideologies. This chapter will attempt to investigate because we will examine various significant elements from the novel while adhering to Allport's ideas; the second section traces an overview of Sigmund Freud's psychoanalysis. It will narrow down the key concept of the theory that will be used to link to the characters psyche in order to comprehend the psychological motives that are based in the character minds, and it will provide an overview of the psychoanalytical strategies by explaining Freudian psychoanalysis of the unconscious mind, and the defense mechanism. Then Feminist theory since the novel's major characters are all women and Stockett's novel *The Help* advocates female empowerment and shows how sisterhood can help women overcome injustice and obtain their rights.

The literary and historical background is the title of the second chapter, it will be divided into two sections, the first portion will cover the author biography as well as the novel summary also the novel main characters in order to connect the reader to the novel background. Moving on, the historical context is the second section, in which we will describe the historical events in the segregated south of the United States, along with

discriminated Mississippi in the 1960's. In addition, the impact of Jim crow Laws on the South and colored people.

The third chapter will consist of giving the final findings of this research and reveals the nature of prejudice, it will connect a variety of elements of Allport's concepts to Kathryn Stockett's novel *The Help*. Which include the dynamics of prejudice, psychodynamics, nature of aggression (aggression as the trait of personality and social patterning of aggression), nature of hatred, character structure "the prejudiced personality," and dichotomization.

The researcher attempts to analyze racial prejudice portrayed in Kathryn Stockett's novel, *The Help*. The story is set in place where there is segregation, social inequality, and intergroup interaction. In which the author aims to investigate the relationship between colored and uncolored people in an unequal society of discrimination while drawing lines of structural racism experienced by African Americans in The 1960's.

# **Chapter One: Theoretical Framework**



## **Introduction:**

The theoretical framework of this study is to be divided into three sections in order to cover as much ground as possible in the available space. The first portion entitled *Theory of Prejudice* by Gordon W. Allport's is mainly an initiation, which contains a background of the theory, sociological ideologies applied by the author. In addition to a simplified definition and an inventory of its major themes.

The next section bears the title *Psychoanalysis from Freudian Perspective*, it narrows down the key concepts of the theory that will be used in the analysis. In order to understand the psychological, cultural motives behind *The Help*, it will provide an overview of the psychoanalytical strategies required for the study by explaining Freudian theory of The Unconscious Mind, and Defense Mechanism, which are rooted in the minds of the characters. Furthermore, to clarify and interpret the motives that lead to the creation of such work.

*Feminist Theory* is the title of the third and last section of this chapter. This closing section was adopted to clarify women concept and their goals, since the characters of the novel are all women and the stories was been told by difference race of female's characters and how they have explained life and their aim of demolishing inequality and being respected by the other side of their life 'male' regardless their skin or their gender. As it has depicted in the novel. In addition to this we intend to speak about the women right movement and black feminism movement in the beginning of the sixties century which conclude the theoretical chapter.

## **I. Theory of Prejudice “Gordon W. Allport”**

Gordon W. Allport's studies on issues of race, made a vital contribution to the civil rights movement and the period of slavery. His landmark work *The Nature of Prejudice*,

created the subject of intergroup relations by explaining prejudice and its effect on group interactions, his book and theory gave a clear vision of ethnic antagonism between colored and uncolored people in the United States during the Jim Crow Law period. Allport's viewpoint encompassed important ideas of prejudice and discrimination coming from sociology, psychology, and history.

## 1. Prejudice as Concept

“It required years of labor and billions of dollars to gain the secret of atom. It will take a still a greater investment to gain the secret of man's irrational nature. It is easier, someone has said, to smash an atom than a prejudice”

(Allport, 1954/1958 11)

The term prejudice, which is derived from the Latin noun *Praejudicim*, has changed meaning since classical times, as have other words. This change goes through three stages, to the ancient *Praejudicim* meant precedent judgment based on previous decisions and experiences. Later, the term acquired the meaning of a premature or hasty judgment. Finally, the term took on its current emotional flavor of favorability and unfavorability, which comes with such an unjustified prior and unsupported judgment (Newman 47- 48). However, the briefest definition in Thomistic philosophy is “thinking ill of others without sufficient warrant” (Allport 6-7).

Allport claims that prejudice is “an antipathy based on a faulty and inflexible generalization” that “may be felt or expressed, directed towards a group as a whole, or towards an individual because he is a member of that group” (Allport 9). He also identified it as “Prejudice is an avertive or hostile attitude toward a person who belongs to a group, simply because he belongs to that group, and is therefore presumed to have the objectionable qualities ascribed to the group” (7).

Allport clarified the distinction between ordinary errors of prejudgment and prejudice. For instance, if a person is capable of correcting his erroneous judgments in light of new evidence, he is not prejudiced. Only when prejudices are irreversible when confronted with new information do they become prejudices. Therefore, the gap between ordinary prejudgment and prejudice is that a prejudgment can be corrected without emotional resistance (Allport 8).

However, Allport considers African Americans to be an ethnic group instead of a racial group because he believes that the latter term, as it is widely understood, gives more significance to inherited distinctions than is scientifically necessary. According to Allport, ethnic prejudice is “an antipathy based upon a faulty and inflexible generalization. It may be felt or expressed. It may be directed toward a group as a whole or toward an individual because he is a member of that group” (9). What distinguished prejudice from other negative social beliefs was first, the inaccuracy of the belief component, which was probably due to overgeneralization from a small set of observations. Second, even in the face of contradictory information, preconceptions remained steadfast (Katz 131).

The nature of prejudice had two layers of meaning. It gave a precise, empirically grounded account of prejudices as social attitudes gained and sustained through the connection of external stimulus, ordinary psychosocial outcomes, and personality structure on one level (Katz 127).

## **2. Acting out Prejudice**

Several people tend to show their unfavorable attitudes in some way, and few try to keep their antipathies to themselves, yet both groups are prejudiced, but only one of them practices discrimination (Allport 7). Allport showed that: the more intense the attitude, the more probably it is to result in a violent action, and this hostile behavior varies from the least energetic to the most active.

- 1- **Antilocution:** This category expresses their prejudice in a way that does not exceed a low degree of overtly hostile activity.
- 2- **Avoidance:** Prejudiced people generally try to avoid members of the out-group; in this situation, the prejudiced person does not hurt them; instead, he bears the responsibility of accommodation.
- 3- **Discrimination:** occurs when a prejudiced person excludes a disliked group from job, residential housing, political rights, education, church, or any other social privilege.
- 4- **Physical Attacks:** If prejudice is exaggerated, it might escalate to violent behavior.
- 5- **Extermination:** Lynching, pogroms, and slaughter are the extreme forms of prejudice.

This five-point scale is used to describe the vast array of acts that might come from prejudiced thoughts toward African Americans or the out-group (Allport 15).

### 3. Prejudice as Generalized Attitude

Prejudice was firmly ingrained in American society, with Allport estimating that 80% of white Americans had "enough animosity against minority groups to influence their daily actions." Because it had various origins in society, culture, and personality, intolerance was widespread. (Allport 78; Katz 131).

Allport acknowledged that prejudice is essentially a personality attribute that grows as a unit in a person's life. The exact object of prejudice is largely irrelevant. As a result, the entire inner life is affected; hostility and dread will spread gradually (Allport73).

### 4. Prejudgment and Categorization

Humans have a tendency to be prejudiced. This proclivity stems from his natural tendency to form a judgment or categorize anything (Allport 27). According to Allport,

categorization is synonymous with generalization. Once formed, categories are the basis for normal prejudgment (Allport 20).

This categorization contains five important characteristics.

- 1- It creates vast groups and civilizations to guide our everyday adjustments.
- 2- As much as possible, categorization assumes the clusters.
- 3- The category allows us to rapidly recognize a similar object.
- 4- The category pervades everything with the same ideational and emotional taste.
- 5- Categories might be rational or irrational.

## **5. The Group- Norm Theory of Prejudice**

According to Allport, the group norm Theory holds that "both groups interaction, in group or out group" establish a style of existence with characteristic codes and beliefs standards and enemies to meet their personal adaptive needs. According to the theory, both broad and subtle pressure keep each individual member in line. The preferences of the group must be his preferences, and its adversaries must be his foes (Allport 39-40).

Muzafer Sherif, the proponent of this theory, claims, "Ordinarily the factors leading individuals to form attitudes of prejudice are not piecemeal. Rather, their information is functionally related to becoming a group member- to adopting the group and its values (norms) as the main anchorage in regulating experience and behavior" (Allport 41). The relative ineffectiveness of attempts to change attitudes by influencing individuals is a significant argument non-favor of this viewpoint, according to Allport, who added that this line of thought has led to the aphorism "It is easier to change group attitudes than individual attitudes." We cannot deny that the theory seems to be very "Collectivistic." Prejudice is not solely a mass phenomenon (Allport 41).

Prejudice is, by definition, an issue of personality formation and development; no individual would replicate his group's attitude unless he had personal needs, or a personal

habit, that compels him to do so. However, it also maintains that one of the most common sources of bias, if not the most common source, rests in the wants and habits that indicate the influence of in-group affiliations on the formation of an individual's personality. Individualistic theories can be held without rejecting that the major influences on individuals may be collective (ibid).

## **6. Rejection of Out- Groups “Verbal, Discrimination”**

Allport addressed intergroup discrimination and violence. As he stated in the first part, prejudice is "an antipathy based on a faulty and inflexible generalization, that may be felt or expressed... towards a group... or towards an individual... member of that group"(Allport 9). In this perspective, discrimination and violence are spontaneous acts of prejudice, and the mechanism that generates prejudice is person-centered, irrational hatred. Hostility is expressed without restriction in verbal vitriol, discriminatory behavior, and physical violence, fueled by categorical beliefs about social groupings that are uninformed, provincial, and dogmatic. The sad fact was that many members of privileged groups carried a toxic animosity for those who did not share their privilege. The good news was that the animosity was born and expressed without any political agenda (Jackman 89).

Allport's in supporting his theory, he gave an example saying: “see that man over there? Yes. Well I hate him. But you don’t know him. That’s why I hate him” (Allport 265). Intergroup hatred had no rational basis: it erupted spontaneously from uneducated and misguided individuals, to be imposed on subordinate victims unilaterally and without artifice. The more severe the negative behavioral traits, the stronger the hostility (Jackman 89).

Allport identified three stages of "rejection" toward out-groups, but we will only concentrate on two: He claimed that verbal rejection and discrimination (including segregation) are both examples of verbal rejection. He Stated “people Bark (antilocution)

is often sharper than their bite (actual discrimination)” (Allport 55-56).and the genesis of each successive step was reliant on the prior one. He considered verbal animosity and rejection to be the most prevalent and least destructive. Although they were also assessed on a scale of light to severe manifestations of anger, with laughs and ridicule being considered less serious, name-calling, and persistent invectives are being considered more serious. The breeding environment for some individuals with higher levels of hatred to discriminate against the target group was provided by this verbal negativity (Jackman 90).

Discrimination, according to Allport, is the denial of equal treatment based on group membership. He stated, Discrimination followed by rejection or inclusion of out-group members, resulted in physical violence, the rarest and most vitriolic manifestation of intergroup enmity. Intergroup violence developed because of a protracted build-up of enmity, with the categorical prejudgment of group being the first essential step. Allport made two main points concerning these habits. First, they were motivated by hatred, and their excessive behavior was a direct sign of the perpetrator's level of hatred. Second, prejudice was purely motivated by irrationally based, personally produced animosity for the target group (Jackman 90).

## **7. Prejudice against Out-Groups**

Prejudice victims may, of course, inflict on others what they have experienced themselves: deprivation of power and status, and any social-privilege desires the feeling of power and status. Pecked at by those above in the pecking order because he sees himself as inferior and they are a threat to him. When African Americans face antagonism from the in-group "uncolored people," they are more likely to respond with prejudice.

They have acquired hatreds and prejudices as a form of defense mechanism. There are reasons why he developed prejudice. The victim's own frustration and fury are the

primary reasons for both his direct and indirect hostility to other groups. He may find comfort in it, despite his tenuous link with the majority (Allport 153-154).

## II. Feminist Theory

African American women's lives were filled with tragedies because they were abused by their masters, but they endured and resisted this dreadful existence for their children, and they did everything they could to ensure that their children had a better life. Many writers have depicted the lives of African American women in both African American and American literature, and these writers have shed light on many aspects of black women's lives from enslavement to the present. Morrison's works addressed difficulties that African American women faced in America. White supremacy and black men's power and authority compounded the misery of being a woman and black.

Alice Walker depicted the struggle of black people and how they overcame the trials and tribulations, they faced. She writes about black women by praising them and emphasizing the importance of women in any society. Walker highlights the problems and role of black women's sisterhood in eradicating men's cruelty and degradation in her novel *Color Purple*. The protagonist of the tale has been through a lot in her life, including being subjected to brutality and rape by her own father. Walker's novel *The Color Purple* begins with a rape scene. Her stepfather raped the novel's protagonist. The novel's rape sequence is inspired on Walker's great-great grandmother, who was raped and impregnated at the age of eleven by her master, Walker's great-great grandfather. As observed, this assault is based on a true event, and it is written to depict what the black female went through (Aydemir 438).

The portrayal of African American women in African American literature is based on real-life experiences of black women. Moreover, this portrayal was motivated by necessity rather than desire. According to Margaret Walker, they began to give readers



powerful insights into grim issues such as race, gender, and class. It is always necessary when approaching Afro-American Literature in any form poetry, prose, fiction, and drama to provide a background of the socioeconomic and political forces as well as the historical context before proceeding to literary analysis or synthesis. Then we will have the tools we need to investigate the strange phenomena observed in America and Afro-American literature (qtd. In African American Women 1).

## 1. History of Feminism

Feminism has a long and rich history; it reflects women's issues and suffering, as well as their hopes for equal opportunity in man-controlled countries. Many of these women refuse to be at the mercy of men and seek to better themselves in the community while breaking down the bonds that men have constructed. They want to demonstrate their strength and capability in order to achieve gender equality. Women founded feminism to focus on women's daily experiences and to emphasize many types of oppressions that women have endured Because of women's marginalization in the political, economic, and social spheres.

Hunburtin Auclert was the first to introduce feminism in France in the late 1880s in France in her publications "*La Citoyenne as la Féminité*", with the goal of criticizing male dominance and advocating for women's rights. Then, in the early twentieth century, feminism developed widely in England and America, as well as in the Arab world as *NISWA* (McCann ET al.15-16).

Since its inception until now, the history of feminism has taken several paths and waves in defending women's rights which was divided into three distinct periods, which scholars refer to as the "Three Waves. "The first wave of feminism began during World War I, when some women demanded their rights and began a strike against undemocratic policies in the United States. They mobilized to reform marriage laws, obtain voting and

open employment (Hansen 369). Sojourner Truth, Mary Wollstonecraft, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Susan Brownell Anthony, and Emmeline Pankhurst were among the renowned people who forwarded and influenced the wave (Fisher and Sanchez).

The second wave emerged in the aftermath of World War II in the 1960's and lasted into the 1990's. This wave arose in the midst of the anti-war and civil rights movements, as well as the growing consciousness of many minority groups around the world. The main topics of the wave at the time were reproductive rights, sexuality, and the push to adopt the Equal Rights Amendment to the Constitution, which ensures equality regardless of gender (Rampton 1).

This wave was easily overlooked because it did not have the same influence as other movements at the time, such as Black Power or efforts to end the Vietnam War. However, second wave feminists established women-only groups such as *National Organization for Women (NOW)* and magazines such as "*Sisterhood is Powerful*" to advocate for social change and women's freedom, as well as more equal work possibilities for women (Rampton 2). Simone de Beauvoir, Betty Friedan, Bell Hooks, Germaine Greer, and Gloria Steinem are among the most well-known women of the second wave (Fisher and Sanchez).

Third wave feminism emerged in the mid-1990s and continues until this day, influenced by postcolonial and postmodern thought. Rebecca Walker is the icon of this wave. The goals of this wave of feminists were to advance feminist theories and politics, as well as to make those theories more successful and effective. They also made recommendations regarding different policies concerning women's duties, as well as other issues concerning gender, class, and sexuality. Third-wave feminists placed a high value on the issue of violence against women, its goals also included putting a stop to the

categorization of women. Its goals included putting an end to categorizing women and erasing stereotypes, this new generation of feminists want not just political and social rights for women, but also performance in all disciplines and, more crucially, a role in life (Ghorfati and Medini 21).

## 2. Womanism

African American women preferred to be womanists rather than black feminists. They favored the term “*Womanism*” over “*Feminism*”. The term “*Womanism*” was coined by Alice Walker in her essay “*In Search of Our Mother's Garden*”: *Womanist Prose* (1983) Womanism was formed from the phrase Womanish, which Afro-American mothers regularly used.

Alice Walker has studied the entire history of African Americans, from enslavement through the long struggle for civil rights to the successes achieved in eliminating unfavorable perceptions and constraints imposed by the white population. She emphasizes the agency, strength, capacity, and independence of the black woman. In contrast to the gender isolation that plagues feminism, womanism offers an option for black women by putting their survival in the context of their community's survival, where the fates of men and women are inexorably interwoven (Napikoski2018).

*Womanism* is not confined to black women; it includes all women of all races.

"Womanist and womanism were not intended to define more narrowly or to shed light on women's experience by expanding the number and variety of words characterizing it," says Gloria Steinem (quoted in "Womanism" 61). Womanism and womanist play an important part in depicting the experiences of African American women and other women of color who have always struggled to overcome racial and sexual institutions (62).

The fundamental womanist credo is that a womanist must create a culture of freedom at any cost.

### **3. Black Feminism Movement**

Women of color have been marginalized in America since the rise of feminism. *Feminism* concentrated solely on the rights of white women while ignoring the rights of African American women. African American women were in a bind because they were ostracized in their communities, and they needed to struggle for both racial and gender liberation. As a result, they established Black Feminism. Patricia Hill Collins is a well-known feminist who claims that feminism did not grant black women any rights because they were barred from participation any social, economic, or political activity carried out by feminist organizations dominated at the time by white women and designated as the ruling class of women. This is why black women rose up against the unfair designation and renamed feminism “*Black Feminism*” (47).

The term *Black Feminism* was not widely used until the 1970s, when the black women's movement began. The purpose of *Black Feminism* is to empower African American women within the framework of social injustice perpetuated by interlocking oppressions (Collins 39). Bell Hooks underlined in her book *Ain't I a Woman: Black Women and Feminism* that black women face several forms of oppression from various sides and are degraded to the lowest place in society. Later on, *the national black feminist group* was founded in 1973, with the goal of achieving political, social, and economic equality for black women. This organization grew out of gatherings of black female lawyers, welfare rights workers, housewives. They organized workshops to investigate issues such as childcare, the church and education, and labor and violence. Alice Walker,

Margaret Sloan, Shireley Chishlom, Eleanor Holms Norton, and Flo Kennedy were among the members (Wada).

As a result, a great description of racial discrimination against black women who live in the deeply prejudiced society of Jackson, Mississippi during Jim Crow Law era can be found in Stockett's novel *The Help*. Prejudice, discrimination, gender inequality, and socioeconomic class are all depicted as problem that black female characters experienced.

Minnie Jackson, one of the main characters in the novel *The Help*, has suffered from prejudice, racism from white masters, also suffering from her drunk husband Leroy, who tries to kill her at the end of the novel when he discovers that he has lost his job because of his wife "he throw the kids in the yard and lock me in the bathroom and say he gone light the house on fire with me locked inside" (Stockett437).

Because they are burdened by the stigmas of race and gender, African American women in *The Help* are treated far more brutally than black men. They are dehumanized and humiliated. Despite the fact that they are indispensable to their families, their white employers treated them unequally.

### **III. Psychoanalysis from Freudian Perspective**

#### **1. Freudian Psychoanalysis Criticism**

Psychoanalysis was not created by Sigmund Freud as a new discipline or medical field. But as developed concepts and notions, ideas that had a significant impact on the interpretation of literary texts, and literary criticism.

According to Freud, language reveal underlying anxieties, and fears. Desires, according to Freud, do not easily express themselves since culture does not allow it. As a result, he insists on focusing on language and other kinds of symbolic expression, such as

gestures, noises, facial expression, and writing. In fact, Freud was investigating the relationship between language and the unconscious, which became the foundation of both psychoanalytic methods and criticism studies (Nayar 64).

However, the unconscious finds ways to express itself, and literary text and language enable this. In reality, Freud's most important discovery was the unconscious mechanisms of desires and anxieties. "Psychoanalytic criticism thus investigates the unconscious language of the repressed and hidden as embodied in literary or cultural content." As well as "art of fiction, with special attention to the repression of sexuality and its impulses," psychoanalytic critique discloses (the subject) of the author's work through pictures, language, and codes in his work (Ibid).

## **2. Freudian Psychoanalysis Strategies**

Sigmund Freud's writings and theories have inspired a set of psychological theories and therapeutic practices known as psychoanalysis. Furthermore, psychoanalysis' central premise is that all people have unconscious thoughts, feelings, wants, and memories. Therefore, we shall be examining Freud theory concerning the unconscious mind and defense Mechanism and their function.

## **3. The Unconscious Mind**

Human actions and behaviors are sometimes unconscious, unclear and unreasonable, making it difficult to predict. According to his theory of psyche, Freud divided the human mind into three components, conscious, preconscious and unconscious (Freud 159), which somehow formed the great contributions in the field of psychology.

He notes that there are reasons and motivations behind all types of behavior, which is why he set out to test the concept of the unconscious to explain the behaviors that people adopt every day.

The terms *Unconscious*, *Preconscious*, and *Conscious* are internationally used. Beginning with the conscious mind, which comprises of all mental processes, feelings, and thoughts that people are aware of, a person merely being familiar with certain events and things happening around him, in which he has complete control over his actions. For example, a person may be thirsty, hungry, or bored and decides to do anything to satisfy his desire. Freud compared the human mind to an iceberg, with consciousness being the tip. Second, there is the preconscious, which lies just below the conscious level and consists of what is known as accessible memory. People's names, specific meals or events, and even a person's phone number are not typically what people think of, but they are easily recalled if a person feels the want or need for it, even if he is unaware of the process by which this type of knowledge resurfaces to the conscious level. Freud regarded the preconscious as a "mental waiting room" where thoughts remain until they catch the conscious attention (Freud and Riviere 306). Finally, the preconscious may contain minor emotions, but traumatic, powerful, and unpleasant sensations that must have been distressing (alarming, painful, or embarrassing) that usually accrue during childhood are not available on this level.

This level of the brain also contains unethical, dark cravings, guilty secrets, and hidden drives that ignite evil behavior and should not be exposed to the conscious (Wade and Travis 16-17). That is the whole objective of the third level of consciousness, which is in charge of repressing all of these thoughts in order to protect the person's mental health. McLeod stated that many researchers agree that these thoughts and sentiments influence judgment, feelings, and behavior they are not visible to conscious mind (McLeod 2014).

As a result, we can no longer make a definitive judgment of an author's intentions, nor can we take for granted the numerous components and motives behind any literary work, such as the novel under consideration, because the unconscious is such an essential factor in human psyche.

#### **4. Defense Mechanisms in Psychoanalysis**

Defense mechanisms, as defined by Sigmund Freud, are mental operations that keep harmful thoughts and affects out of awareness (Williams 637). Another definition is that defensive systems aid in the resolution of disputes caused by internal or external pressures. Furthermore, Freud demonstrates the distinct nature of defense mechanisms, namely the obsessive battle between the Ego and Id.

In psychoanalysis, these defenses are portrayed as unconscious and can be classified as effective, where displays of instinctual urges are permitted, and failed, where the instinct is not expressed and continual repetition of the defense is required. Furthermore, Freud contended that (sublimation consists in forsaking the sexual purpose for another, which is no longer sexual) and that there are many defenses within this category. The first process involves a change from active to passive or a reversal of context, such as love becoming hate. Furthermore, Freud believes that the core of repression is the function of rejection and keeping something out of consciousness, and that there are two varieties (Hentschel 3-4). The first phase is primordial repression, which refers to the denial of the mental presentation of the instinct's arrival into consciousness. Second, there is repression proper, which is concerned with the mental connections of the repressed presentation, which also denied access into Consciousness. This mental energy is converted into affects, particularly anxiousness (Hentschel 4).



Furthermore, projection is the attribution of one's own unwanted emotions and beliefs to others. Isolation is also unusual, according to Freud; in obsessional neurosis, events are separated from their associations and feelings. Finally, Freud claims that the process through which the ego regresses to a previous stage might be exploited as a defense (Ibid 5) The basic defenses described in Freudian thought are utilized to protect the ego from pain.

## **Conclusion**

Overall, this first chapter serves as the study's backbone, laying the groundwork and laying the cornerstone for following analyses of personality and segregation, racism's impact on human behavior through Socio-psychic lenses, and providing greater context for the characters' actions and beliefs. It has sought to investigate the dissertation theoretical framework. This provided the researcher with the essential notions contained in Gordon W. Allport's Prejudice Theory, followed by an examination of Sigmund Freud's Psychoanalysis, beginning with his criticism and theory of the unconscious mind, and then moving on to the Freudian theory of defensive mechanism.

The third half of the chapter was about Feminist Theory, in which the researcher reveal the long history of Feminism and its conceptual significance, which will enable the researcher in polymerizing the idea of depicting women in society through Feminist movement in the novel.

**Chapter Two:**  
**Literary and Historical Background**

## **Introduction:**

The literary and historical backdrop are divided into two sections in the second chapter of this study. The first portion is the literary backdrop, which includes the author biography as well as the novel, and it is distinctive.

The second half is the historical context, which illuminates the history of discrimination in the south, as well as the understanding of Mississippian segregation throughout the 1960's. Jim Crow laws and their impact on the southern United States have prompted colored people to constitute a historical aspect relevant to our study.

## **I. Kathryn Stockett: Literary Background**

### **1. Kathryn Stockett Background**

Kathryn Stockett is a new writer and editor who has contributed to the literary field of Southern fiction. Stockett was born in 1969 in Jackson, Mississippi and reared there. She received her bachelor's degree in English and creative writing from the University of Alabama before moving to New York City to work in publishing. She worked in magazine publishing and marketing for nine years before relocating to Atlanta, Georgia, with her daughter "she divorced from her husband in 2011". Stockett has focused on writing fiction since returning to the South. Her debut novel, *The Help*, was published by Amy Einhorn Books in 2009 and became one of the summer season's best-sellers. Stockett, like her character Skeeter, battled to break into the writing world; her work was rejected by almost sixty literary agencies before being accepted by Susan Ramer. (Detroit et al 2010)

*The Help* drew immediate attention because of its distinctive and infrequently treated subject matter: the 1960s connection in the South between white households and black domestic employees. Stockett was aware with the dynamic, having grown up in Mississippi during this time period, but she was hesitant to address it in a novel, knowing

that it was a contentious issue that may result in criticism from both reviewers and general readers. Stockett expressed her childhood perspective to Book reporter: "Growing up in Mississippi, practically every family I knew had a black woman working in their house—cooking, cleaning, and caring for the white children." That was everyday life in Mississippi. I was young and thought that was how most people in America lived." Only after moving north did Stockett discover that her childhood experiences were not shared by everyone. She found herself sharing anecdotes about growing up with black domestic assistance with other Southerners she met in New York. Eventually, those memories sparked an idea, and she decided to construct a story about her childhood bond with her family's maid. Despite her close relationship with her maid Demetrie, Stockett never considered what Demetri's life would be like outside of the duties she did for the white home. She composed this novel to fill the void (Detroit G 2010).

## **2. The Help Novel**

*The Help* is a novel written by Kathryn Stockett and published in 2009 and became National Bestseller. The novel talks about the lives of black maids who were segregated by the white master around 1960's in Jackson, Mississippi. Segregation and racism were not only in Mississippi, but also in the whole Southern State of America where colored maids has lived under uncolored folk mercy. African American slaves were important for the hard work and plantations, but the number of colored people has become triple then the whites, this was vital reason for uncolored populations to put the colored folk under their wings and grip on their poor soul for their own protection and their economy. In other words, the growth of slavery and the attendance of the slaves in the national create nervousness for the uncolored Mississippian.

The novel is a work of fiction based on true stories, but it is closely and realistically related to a number of social and political issues, such as the description of the early civil right movements and the interaction between the colored maids and their white employers, which is sprinkled throughout the story. The stories of three dynamic women in *The Help* deal with the issue of Segregation. Feminism and Race relations take place in Jackson, Mississippi, between 1962 and 1964. The novel is told through the eyes of three main characters, all of whom are females.

Miss Skeeter Phelan, an ambitious and well-educated white woman, and two-colored maids, Aibileen and Minny. Those women will join hands for a clandestine project that will put all of them in danger; they have grown tired of living within the lines that defines their town; and they have taken a stand against the inhumane conditions of the colored maids in The South. Throughout the novel, those three woman are recording down many blacks maids' stories about their interactions with Jackson's white families, the black's maids have been living a stressful life since the collection of stories was published.

They were terrified by their boss's reactions. Indeed, every white woman in Jackson town knew which character she was in the book, but they could not react because they would be revealed and known by their terrible actions for their maids, especially Miss Hilly, who knew the writer but couldn't protest because she would be the funniest part of the book with her chocolate pie. She has struggled to persuade Jackson society that the stories are not in Jackson, and that she must maintain the same image that people used to see her in order to keep her high position in society. Miss Skeeter, Aibileen, and Minny bear fruit at the end of the book. Each of them has realized their ambitions. Skeeter has applied for a new job at Harper's & Row Magazine in New York and has left the town. Aibileen had decided to quit her job and begin writing. Minny has finally found her way;

she had taken her children and abandoned her abusive husband in favor of her sister Octavia because she was financially secure.

According to Kathryn Stockett regarding her novel *The Help*, she stated, “I was scared, a lot of the time, that I was crossing a terrible line, writing in the voice of a black person. I was afraid I would fail to describe a relationship that was so intensely influential in my life, so loving, so grossly stereotyped in American history and literature”( Stockett 450). Additionally, she stated “what I am sure about is this: I don’t presume to think that I know what it really felt like to be a black woman in Mississippi, especially in the 1960s” (450).

## **2.1. The Plot Summary**

*The Help* novel's exposition begins by introducing the stories of three key characters: Aibileen, Minny, and Miss Skeeter Phelan. They stated their traits, where they lived, with whom they lived, and how they lived in Jackson, Mississippi, a small town community. Rising action In *the Help* novel was when Miss Skeeter asked the help of the colored maid Aibileen “I need your help“. Aibileen initially opposed this absurd proposal, but after a few days, she changed her mind and agreed to support Miss Skeeter's secret project by getting other maids to relate their everyday interactions with their white female employers. Minny, her best friend, was the first to be invited. Raising action had occurred in most of the tension, action, and minor conflicts that occurred in the Help novel episodes such as Miss Skeeter's relationship with her lover Stewart, Aibileen teaching Moe Mobley about suspects of life, Skeeter and the enemies’ relationship with Miss Hilly, Miss Celia's pregnancy and her secret saver maid Minny.

The climax was the day after the book's publication. The main three characters were on fire, more worried, and anticipating the book's influence on society. This point in

the narrative represented the highest roundness, which led to Hilly breaking her long silence and revealing her true face to Skeeter and Aibileen. She went to Phelan's house and threatened her lowly, then returned for Aibileen and fired her. Minny left her husband because he abused her and threatened to burn her alive.

When Aibileen had to say farewell to her special infant Moe Mobley, it was a falling action. She addressed her as if she were speaking to an adult. She informed her that she was retiring and asked her to remember what she had taught her, which was that she is Kind, Smart, and Important. Miss Skeeter relocated to New York after Aibileen encouraged her to pursue her dreams and find her life.

## **2.2. The setting**

To a large extent, setting is a key component of each story. Many of the concerns addressed by the author will be understood by the readers, who will gain a new perspective on their own civilizations. The novel by Kathryn Stockett, set in 1960s Jackson, Mississippi, addressed key topics such as segregation, prejudice, and gender norms. The environment has also provided significant insight into character motivations and beliefs, particularly those of Hilly Holbrook and Skeeter Phelan.

Stockett has provided a portal for others to observe how difficult it was to live in Mississippi during the civil rights era. She has given other examples of Mississippi discrimination, such as the deacon who remarked in church that Mississippi and the rest of the world are two distinct places. This revelation has revealed what Mississippi has been hiding. Mississippi's hatred for black people had not altered, despite the fact that the rest of the world's views on segregation had evolved. Mississippi's inhabitants were firmly entrenched in their racist beliefs. Furthermore, the representation of segregation has been greatly highlighted by the town divide and the lack of security for the colored people, as

Minnie stated, "Who's going to guard our people, ain't no colored policemen" (Help 37); Minnie's response shows her lack of trust in Mississippi's white law.

The setting is significant in the narrative because it enables readers to comprehend the true significance of gender norms in Mississippi. There were rigid roles that guided both genders in the 1960s. Women have been led by social custom to specialized household jobs such as secretaries, nurses, and sales girls. They just have the opportunity to bear children and raise them, with no additional responsibilities. Skeeter, the main character in the setting, has revealed this. She went home after four years of college, hoping to gain a position as a journalist at the local newspaper Jackson Journal. Her work interview showed how males view women only as housekeepers, where the editor directly asked her, "I suppose you know how to clean?" (Help 22). Despite the fact that alternative jobs were posted, the editor disregarded her ability and gender.

Many key elements of books can be understood to a large extent through the setting. *The Help* has helped to bring to light key themes such as prejudice, segregation, injustice, and sexism. The environment has assisted readers in understanding the character motivations of both Hilly and Skeeter, and readers will gain an understanding of the location that has risen in. The setting of Jackson, Mississippi in the 1960's helps readers understand the historical events and characters' actions in the story.

### **3. Novel's Main Characters**

#### **3.1. Miss Eugenia Skeeter Phelan Character**

"I'd like to write this showing the point of view of *The Help*. The colored women down here.' I tried to picture Constantine's face, Aibileen's. 'They raise a white child and then twenty years later the child becomes the employer. It's that irony that we love them and



they love us, yet...' I swallowed, my voice trembling. 'We don't even allow them to use the toilet in the house" (Stockett125).

This phrase refers to Skeeter's desire to use her social position to give voice to the black women she knows, and it gives her the authority to write her book.

Miss Skeeter, also known as Eugenia Phelan, grew up in Jackson, Mississippi. She is one of the novel's three main characters. In many aspects, she was regarded as an innocent well-meaning person, an ambitious single educated white girl, and a friend of two well-known women, Hilly Holboock and Elizabeth Leefolt. Constantine, a black woman that Skeeter admired and respected, reared Skeeter as a child.

She uncovered her raiser Constantine's mystery disappearance after obtaining a degree in English and journalism from Mississippi's university and returning home. Skeeter is now employed at the Jackson Journal. She is responding to Miss Myrna's letters regarding things she cannot accomplish alone because she lacks housekeeping experience, forcing her to rely on Aibileen's knowledge for her new work.

Skeeter is a contentious protagonist. She is dealing with uncolored issues that are not shared by the colored protagonist. Skeeter's mother is continuously reminding her about fashion, dating, and marriage. Miss Skeeter does not care about fashion or appearance; all she wants to be is an editor and author, not a "housewife," as her mother wishes. Skeeter is one of the few uncolored girls in Jackson, Mississippi who is still a bachelor. Skeeter has also encountered sexist discrimination, making it difficult for her to assert herself as a writer because she is female. The only thing that might accept her as a female writer in the corporate sector is *The Help* book she has planned to publish. She decided to write it partially because of the unfair treatment of the African maids and partly to catch the attention of Elaine Stein, who encouraged her to write about what bothers her but not others. Elaine does in fact published *The Help*.

### 3.2. Aibleen Character

Aibleen, a colored maid, opens the first chapter of *The Help* novel. Aibleen is an elderly black woman in her mid-fifties. She has raised sixteen white children, including the most recent baby girl, Moe Mobley Leefolt, who is already caring for her. The opening of the novel presented to readers the deep bond between Moe Mobley and her nanny, as well as how much Aibleen misses her son Treelor, who perished in an industrial accident five months prior. Aibleen's anguish follows her throughout the novel.

I put down the iron real slow, Feel that bitter seed grow in my chest, The one planted after Treelore died. My face goes hot, my tongue twitchy. I do not know what to say to her. All I know is, I ain't saying it. (Help 29)

The quote describes why Aibleen is changing. The loss of Treelor has generated a reason for protest and reform, which explains in detail how significant her son was in the story. Aibleen has two distinctive features. The first trait is how spiritual she is, and her beliefs have given her the confidence to face Jackson's difficult existence. Life “The thing is though, if I start praying' for Miss Skeeter, I know that conversation gone continue the next time I see her. And the next. Because that is the way, prayer do. It's like electricity, it keeps things going” (Help 19). Which demonstrates the significance of religion to her. Aibleen was recognized in Jackson's black community as a woman whose prayers God hears: “My mouth drop open. Why she never tell me this before? “You saying people think I got the black magic? (Help 24).

Religion is very important to Aibileen, as seen by the fact that she writes her prayers down every night and continually refers to God, as well as using Him to explain many elements of life to Moe Mobley. Indeed, Aibileen tells Moe Mobley that "God created her colored" (Help 392). When Moe Mobley inquires about their skin color differences. The ideal mother Aibleen has represented by being loving, caring, and

adoring all white children she has nursed is the second feature. Even as a nanny, she has taught Moe Mobley many things of life by pointing to God when Moe Mobley has asked Aibeleen about skin color.

### **3.3. Minny Character**

She always been a strong woman, always fighting. After Treelore Died, she carry supper over to me every night for three months Straight. And every day she say, “Nuh-uh, you ain’t leaving me On this sorry earth without you”, but I tell you, I was sure enough Thinking about it. (Help 17)

This is Aibeleen's testimony on her closest friend Minny. She is in her forties and works as a maid for Jackson's white family. Minny has appeared in a number of roles as a too black, angry woman who represents the others, as well as a mother of five children who is married to an alcoholic and violent man named Leroy. Minny is one of well-known across Jackson as a good cook, particularly her famous Chocolate pie, is acknowledged by the entire Jackson community. Despite her cooking skills, Manny has been dismissed numerous jobs due to her terrible habit of not controlling her reactions and talking back. Minny has difficulty-finding job, especially after she has stocked with the wrong popular white woman in Jackson society, Miss Hilly Holbrook, by offending and humiliating her by eating Minny's shits cake. Minny Jackson is a self-sufficient, threatening, and black woman you can rely on. She created the chocolate pie as a form of revenge for being fired and falsely accused of stealing. Minny's character has exhibited domestic abuse at home by her husband Leroy since the beginning of the story. Readers uncover domestic violence when Leroy returns home drunk and pushes her around (Help 153).

Minny has found work for a white lady named Celia Foote, but she and her new boss must keep it a secret since Miss Celia wants to convince her husband that she is the

perfect wife. Minny accepts that condition just on occasion because she now earns twice as much as she did previously. At the end of the story, Minny and her children had abandoned their abusive husband and moved in with her sister Octavia, who has become financially secure.

## **II. Historical Background : The History of Discrimination in the South**

### **1. History of Mississippi during the 60<sup>th</sup> Century**

Segregation and racism were not only in Mississippi, but also in the whole Southern State of America where that last has its roots of slavery, which was brought to Mississippi via the colonial French and later on by the English and the Spanish (Dawahare2003).

White Mississippians were concerned about the evolution of slavery and the existence of slaves in their state. Without a doubt, black people were required for the expansion of the plantations; yet, their numbers grew at the expense of whites, necessitating the continuation of slavery to meet the white population's economic and security needs.

As a response, Mississippi State seceded from the Confederacy in 1861, making her a second secede state. Following the conquest of the Confederacy, reconstruction began in 1877, and the republicans tried to prevent the democrats from re-establishing authority and control in the southern states by uncolored people. During reconstruction, the 14th and 15th amendments were included into the constitutions of the newly captured states by federal military power, which was enforced throughout the south (Meibom 4).

This last clause emphasizes that all citizens of the United States, including former slaves, are entitled to equal legal protection and the right to vote. The white people benefited from the same equals as the uncolored people, but only until 1877. The federal

audiences had dispersed, allowing for increased violence and discrimination against colored people, as seen by the passage of segregation laws like as the Jim Crow laws and the formation of organizations such as the Ku Klux Klan (race and voting in the segregated south 2014).

Furthermore, a conference was held in 1890 to draft a new state constitution excluding black people from voting. The 15th Amendment, however, prevented this, and a number of voting restrictions were enacted, including literacy tests, taxes, and the "grandfather clause," which allowed automatic registration for anybody whose grandfather had been granted voting rights prior to the Civil War. These restrictions disproportionately harmed the black people, the majority of whom were former slaves, poor, and illiterate (ibid).

later The Civil Rights Movement began in the 1950s with the purpose of regaining black people's natural citizen rights and breaking the silence, standing against segregation and white power, and demanding for black people's rights and equalities that uncolored people possessed. Although segregation is no longer mandated by the constitution, tensions between whites and blacks persist in many parts of life (Form2016).

## **2. Jim Crow's Law in the South**

From the 1820's to the 1870's, a song and dance routine performed by an actor in one of the country's most successful minstrel shows gave rise to the term Jim Crow. Thomas Dartmouth "Daddy" Rice, a white man, played an elderly black slave with a black face in one of the traveling acts (Flomsbee 1949).

However, Jim Crow law was originated in the South in the late 1800s, supported racial segregation. Because of their freedom, white people's souls were filled with fear after slavery was abolished. The idea that black people would share their social facilities

with them if those unlikable people had access to the same healthcare, education, and work appalled white people. White people were already irritated by certain blacks' reconstruction accomplishments (Michelle 7).

However, laws impose a variety of restrictions on people of color. The law stifled black progress and classified these people as second-class citizens in America.

Since 1865, Florida has been renowned as the first state to establish an anti-Crow statute. A complete year of regulations requiring racial segregation in public transportation and other social facilities was in 1887. Florida State was in charge of the set of rules. In the 1890's, the American south became entirely segregated. Every social gathering place became segregated between the races. People of color were required to use separate restrooms, restaurants, and buses. Additionally, colored people had to drink water from separate fountains from white people. Even in the theater, having the same access or staying under the same roof was illegal; each of them had their own theater. Furthermore, segregated schools in an inequitable manner, people lived in different areas (Michelle 9).

African Americans posed a threat to white citizens, who were disgusted at the prospect of such a black people sharing the same social privilege as them. *Jim Crow law*, or *the second wave of white supremacy*, was the solution to limit African Americans' rights and freedom, bringing a system of racial segregation throughout the south and the rest of America's segregated states. But all of these laws that were imposed on African Americans that denied them their liberty and privileges as decent human beings didn't stop them from challenging and resisting *Jim Crow Law* from the beginning .

As a result, *Jim Crow Law* has been the most apartheid system that divided colored and uncolored people, and made racism more rooted within society.

## Conclusion

While the preceding chapter discussed the socio-psychological aspects that lead to discrimination, this chapter discussed the historical and literary context, as well as how life-changing events abound in African American history, turning their lives and the American culture on their heads. For decades, they faced enormous hurdles in the struggle against slavery and unlawful discrimination by using the law to demean and dehumanize black people. The novel's characters have reflected Jackson's daily existence, making readers more aware of her and other characters' lives. A person may be aware of historical events that was mentioned in literary works. Stockett's literary work transports readers to Mississippi's past, explaining how Blacks and White women's relationships were built on, and how perilous it was to put hand in hand with black maids and defy social antique tradition by revealing society's secret in the hopes of assisting those colored maids. For their illicit behavior, a racial maid lost her life and the future of a white ambitious girl.

**Chapter Three:**  
**Revealing the Nature of Prejudice**



## **Introduction:**

In this chapter, we will seek to explore a number of elements linked to Allport's work, *The Nature of Prejudice*, and other related concerns into the concept of racial prejudice as depicted in Kathrin Kathryn Stockett's novel, *The Help*. The story takes place in a world of segregation and social injustice, in which the author attempts to evenhandedly examine the relationship between a black person and a white person in the unequal world of discrimination while drawing lines of structural racism experienced by African-Americans in the 1960s.

Therefore, in this chapter, we will attempt to investigate several keys from the novel while adhering to Allport's ideas, such as the dynamics of prejudice, psychodynamics, nature of aggression (aggression as the trait of personality and social patterning of aggression), nature of hatred, character structure "the prejudiced personality," and dichotomization. We will examine these featured elements by providing examples from the novel and interpreting some historical events as transpired in both the fictional setting of the story and the real world.

### **1. The Dynamics of Prejudice**

*The Help* (2009) by Kathryn Stockett depicts the unpleasant, degrading, and painful living conditions of black maids in Jackson, Mississippi during the 1960s. It addresses the various forms of racism that exist in this community, such as blatant, systemic, and institutionalized racism. As a result, it is critical to investigate the history of interracial dynamics in the United States, which offers insight into the symptom of white supremacy while also demonstrating the harmful implications of racial prejudice. To gain a better understanding of what constitutes interpersonal prejudice in Stockett's novel, one has to investigate the connections between white and black characters in Jackson, Mississippi, as represented in her work.

In this fictional setting, we are introduced to the everyday hardships of African Americans seeking to live with integrity and dignity from the beginning of this work. *The Help*, set in the segregated South, describes events in Jackson, Mississippi during the late summers of 1962 and 1964. The plot, in particular, focuses attention on these women's troubling dilemmas, as they struggle to cope with their horrible living conditions. The several factors, ranging from classicism, discrimination, and racism, to blatant heinous crimes against African American maids performed by white Americans, are all worthy of discussion, but the most prominent theme in this narrative is the strong racial prejudice towards Blacks in general.

The novel is narrated in the voices of three different women: Eugenia Phelan (nicknamed Skeeter) – a white young college graduate who wants to be a journalist and takes on the task of writing a book about black maids' struggles from their perspective, Aibileen Clark – a wise black maid who raised seventeen white children, and Minny Jackson – an outspoken black maid who convinces other black maids to assist Skeeter in writing the book. Each narrator provides her unique history, ideas, and yearning for change. However, the novel exposes not just white employers' discrimination toward black maids, but also the discriminatory treatment of Blacks by white Americans of all ages and walks of life. Each maid in this environment has a story to tell, about either the household she works in or something tragic that happened on Mississippi's perilous streets.

The characters of *The Help* have to deal with different forms of prejudice daily. Prejudice essentially, in terms of sociological context, implies developing an opinion or pre-judge something before the facts is obtained. Prejudice was first studied as a socio-psychological phenomenon by Allport, G. W. In the 1950's, he defined it as “an animosity based on inaccurate and inflexible generalization towards a group as a whole or towards an individual because they are a part of that group” (35). Allport's definition informs us that

prejudice is not founded on logic or facts, but rather on a series of assumptions, half-truths, and educated guesses. If prejudice is an attitude, then discrimination is its manifestation, and the outcome is a stigma, which solidifies all the negative stereotypes that surround that individual, community, and culture.

Nonetheless, delving into prejudice as a symptom of systematic racism is different from understanding it as an innate human condition in that we do not require the direct unfounded or irrational, definitions of Allport's. For that reason, Amy Eshleman Wagner College, in *The Justification-Suppression Model of Prejudice: An Approach to The History of Prejudice Research*; reading Allport's work closely, define prejudice as "a negative opinion of a social group, or a negative evaluation of an individual that is significantly based on the individual's group membership" (Eshleman & College 237). For instance, Hilly Holbrook, who is set as the main antagonist of the three main voices in the story, is a character who effectively embodies what prejudice entails. Hilly, the president of the Jackson Junior League aims to support PSCAs (The Poor Starving Children of Africa), who appears to be a noble person on the surface, yet she approaches other black women with prejudice and disdain. This type of prejudice is common in Jackson's judgmental town, as seen by Hilly Holbrook's treatment of her black maid Minny Jackson and Aibileen Clark, the black maid who works for her friend Elizabeth Leefolt.

When Holbrook joins her friends at Elizabeth's house for a weekly bridge game, she alleges that African Americans spread numerous diseases and that she wishes to keep black maids away from white houses by providing separate restrooms for the maids in the yards. As a consequence, she attempts to push legislation requiring all Mississippians to construct outdoor restrooms for their black maids, which she refers to as "a disease-preventive measure" (Stockett8). As a result, Aibileen had to use a different restroom outside the Leefolt's house after a few days.

Hence, we can effectively grasp what prejudice entails in this novel if we assume that it is marked by racial superiority assumptions made by white people who perceive themselves to be superior in terms of intellect or personality qualities fueled by the hegemonic discourse of the time about black people. Gracia viewed Hilly's role in this story as "the self-serving power broker in this female world of white social elites" (Garcia et al 54). This condition of prejudice is most widely recognized as systemic racism, as Gertrude Ezorsky reports in her study on the correlation between prejudice and racism: "[prejudice] takes place only if a harm is inflicted or a benefit withheld either because of the perpetrator's racial bias against the victim or because that perpetrator obliged the race prejudice of others" (Ezorsky 9).

Another noticeable trait, that Hilly exhibits, is that she tends to raise her voice higher "when she talks to colored people" (Stockett 157). Her tone of voice reveals that she regards African Americans as inferior and less intellectual than Whites. Nevertheless, when Hilly discovers that Aibileen assisted Skeeter in writing a book on the black maids in Jackson hired by white Americans (including Hilly and Elizabeth), Hilly forces Elizabeth to fire Aibileen for falsely accusing the black maid of stealing her three pieces of silverware.

## **2. The Psychodynamics**

Psychodynamic interactions between characters are one of several processes that demonstrate how the South society in the U.S. used to function both instinctively and consciously. One of the primary indicators of this later is the projection of undesirable sentiments onto someone else rather than accepting or dealing with them. As shown in the novel, *The Help*, Skeeter casts her fear of being undesirable and inadequate onto the black characters. A happy individual, according to M.A.R. Habib's citation of Freud in his book *A History of Literary Criticism*, does not feel the need to construct a separate

universe or reality. The realization of escapism is a correction of disappointing reality and one of the driving impulses of fantasy. (M.A.R. Habib 580).

Allport describes how vital it is to refer to the concept of the superego structure in studying human relations while reading S. Freud's accounts on psychodynamics. This draws attention to the projection of society as a group of individuals, all of whom share an Ego that serves as a substitute for the one. This school of thought holds that a person's Ego expels anything within itself that causes unhappiness and the undesirable (136). Freud observes that the Superego, being idealistic, persuades the mind that feelings like hatred or weakness are unacceptable, but the Ego attempts to solve the problem by convincing the unaware mind that these feelings are performed by another person, thus projecting one's own default emotions onto another to feel better. Anna Freud, who carried on her father's work, believed that projection helps people get rid of all the bad painful ideas they are ashamed to think about. She reports that the ideal approach for breaking the link between the personification of harmful impulses and the ego (Freud122).

The novel illustrates two psychological dynamics that mingle with one another: the Id and the Ego, which are personified by white homeowners' antipathy towards black maids. Because of their ego complex, white women are more likely than black women to be impulsive with their desires, which are more attainable to them. Maids, on the other hand, are treated harshly and humiliatingly, making them feel inferior to white Americans. Some desires, such as those repressed in the Id, may cause issues within the superego structure if they are not vocalized and carefully addressed (that is of the society in this case). Eventually, the maids are compelled to follow their desire to change this loathsome lifestyle, which is why they are keen to share their bad experiences with white and black Americans through a book co-written with Skeeter. Thus, in this narrative, we

have two distinct psychological dynamics in terms of classes and races, which we will outline: one involving black women versus white women dynamics, and the other concerning employers' versus employees' interplays.

In short, psychodynamics is the study of how various components of the mind, personality, or psyche interact with mental, emotional, or motivational influences, particularly at the unconscious level (Freud 4-5). However, in Stockett's novel, these dynamics extend beyond one's own experience in that we must be cognizant of social conditions which are harsher on black women, and which enable such psychological aberrations in an environment riddled with dichotomies of various degrees. For instance, Mill makes the case that "the problematic cross-racial interactions remain an ongoing dynamic that informs and shapes what happens to black women when they go to work as maids and caregivers in white women's houses" (Mills XIII). To comprehend how interactively the characters impact one another, within these two spheres the racial and economic ones, we must tackle the novel's most malevolent and innocent characters: Hilly and Mae Mobley.

Hilly yields power in her community as evidenced by how often she dictates how other white middle-class women treat their maids. Therefore, the impulse of racial prejudice is further undertaken by Elizabeth Leefolt's judgmental attitude, a character who blindly follows Hilly Holbrook's comments. When Elizabeth's little daughter, Mae Mobley, visits Aibileen's restroom, she informs her that Aibileen is filthy and unhealthy. Eventually, Leefolt reinforces prevalent racial behaviors and attitudes toward the younger white generation. This case depicts how racism is passed down from generation to generation as a byproduct of how such social unfavorable tendency was unchallenged during the 1950s value system in the Southern areas of the United States, which fostered cycles of prejudice towards Blacks.

At unconscious levels, there are several occasions where racism erupts into violence between the two racial groups. For example, the author depicts Robert's case: Robert, the grandson of black maid Louvenia Brown, gets assaulted with a tire iron by Whites after entering the unmarked toilet allocated for white Americans at Pinchman Lawn and Garden. Eventually, he ends up blind and another casualty of this unfortunate situation. Stockett represents how often the dynamics are controlled by those who hold power, i.e., the white community, especially when the whites burned down the house of Aibileen's cousin in Cauter Country because just she voted. Another instance is when white Americans chopped off the tongue of a black woman, the cousin of Aibileen's husband, as she was speaking with someone from Washington about the Ku Klux Klan.

What is crucial to mention is that white people in positions of institutional power frequently abuse their employees, as evidenced by psychodynamics between whites and blacks. Consider the relationship between Elizabeth Leefolt and Aibileen Clark, her black maid. The thorough accounts of Elizabeth's behavior clearly show that her black maid faces discrimination at work. The Leefolts' construction of a separate restroom in the garage for Aibileen is the finest illustration of racial tyranny. It is equally important to note that Aibileen' work[s] for Miss Leefolt eight to four, six days a week except Saturdays" (Stockett 16). She is paid" forty-three dollars [every] Friday, which come[s] to \$172 a month" (16), and she is scared to approach Leefolt for minimum wage, even though she barely makes ends meet. She is disregarded" when the babies get too old and stop being color-blind "(128). According to the story's narratives, Aibileen had seventeen children, which meant she had to change jobs frequently. Reading this closely, Mills claims that

Anything that happen[s] during the course of any day a black woman work[s] in a white home [is] almost invariably her fault. [...] If a white child fell, it [is] because the black woman [is] not attentive enough. If the biscuits [are] burned or the

chicken slightly undercooked, then, in the absence of slavery-sanctioned corporeal punishment, docked wages—or firing—would be the result. (Mills XII)

Using these instances from the novel helps us to investigate the psychological dynamics of the characters in this narrative. As a consequence, the author's use of multiple events in which the characters' personalities and behaviors, based on their interactions, allow us to comprehend the perspectives of the time throughout the story.

### **3. Nature of Racial Aggression**

The study of racial aggression and violence has long been a focus of academics across the world. The racial aggression against African Americans, or those inflected by them, exacerbated the problem of poverty, as well as social, economic, and political problems. In this part, we will look at aggression from the perspective of black females. In the novel, the psychological possible consequences of discrimination include resentment and aggression.

First, we must recognize the roots of aggression directed against and/or have been done by black people themselves. The more thorough explanation may be as convoluted as American history, but the simple answer relates to the systematic discrimination, which spawned from the racist view of the blacks as inferior *other*. For instance, white residential neighborhoods are often in the elite area, and African American residential areas are far from it. Moreover, there are also many churches for whites and African Americans; however, African Americans have their own churches, where all congregations are African Americans. The separation of toilets between employers and maids, or between whites and African Americans, is another direct indication of segregation. Discrimination, in general, generates harmful consequences on the fabric of society. In fact, according to Sellers et al



Discrimination causes negative psychological effects such as resentment and psychological discomfort, as well as a loss in self-esteem (Sellers. et al 33).

The Mississippi State, seceded from the Confederacy in 1861, making it a second secede state. Following the defeat of the Confederacy, reconstruction began in 1877; at the time, the Republicans sought to prevent the 14 democrats from re-establishing authority and control in the southern states by African Americans. During reconstruction, the 14th and 15th amendments were included in the constitutions of the newly won states by federal military rule. However, moving on ward to the 50s and 60s, the negative stigma black individuals received from the white communities was not relinquished and has in fact become the source of their low self-esteem. According to Hartshorn, Whitbeck, and Hoyt, perceived racial discrimination is connected with extreme cases of aggression and anger (54). Lochmanet all states that “anger is defined as a person’s response to a threat or the perception of a threat against an individual or group” (Lochman. et al115). Hence, this mood, once becomes the norm dwelling within certain communities, is frequently difficult to manage by authorities. According against to Hartshorn, Whitbeck, and Hoyt, aggressive conduct has been implemented to control the frustrated African American communities which led to the perceived racial discrimination era (54). Therefore, aggression has been a manifestation of systematic approaches ranging from racial discrimination, and hostilities, to violent conduct.

It is crucial to emphasize that, while anger is tied with aggression, the two are not the same. Both Anger and aggressiveness; nonetheless, are major factors of aggression. Aggressiveness is defined as “the readiness for aggression or acceptance of and tendency toward aggressive actions” (Ahmadi. et al 248); whereas, according to Hartshorn, Whitbeck, and Hoyt, anger is a typical emotional response to discrimination (55). Hartshorn, Whitbeck, and Hoyt, likewise, believe that “experiences with discrimination

lead to feelings of anger” and anger itself has been identified as “an antecedent of aggression” (55). This implies that anger may occur as a result of aggressive treatment, such as racial discrimination. Effectively, then, racial discrimination has been linked to both anger and aggressiveness.

### **3.1. Aggression as a Trait of Personality**

It has been claimed that attitudinal factors such as personality traits make certain people more prone to aggression than others (Deffenbacher et al 44). An aggressive personality trait or trait of aggressiveness is defined as “a general propensity to engage in acts of physical and verbal aggression, a proneness to anger, and a proneness to hold hostile beliefs about other people across situations” (Berkowitz456) In the instance of Minny, which we will examine, she represents the trait of aggression as a byproduct of malfeasance perpetrated on her by Hilly.

The relationship between Hilly and Minny in the story is that of a maid and an employer. Minny is compelled into the only socioeconomic context she knows since most African Americans in Mississippi were unable to complete their education. In other words, *The Help* is ultimately a story about a fractured society that is dominated by white perceptions of class, gender, and race whilst also entrusting the raising of their children to black maids. As a result, virtually all middle-class white people assigned childcare to African American maids, perpetuating stereotypes of the black mother figure as the white servant. When Hilly dismisses her maid, Minny, and spreads rumors about her being a thief, seeking a suitable job difficult for Minny becomes difficult. Racial prejudice was a devastating effect on the lives of African Americans, as seen by the novel’s characterization of Aibileen and Minny. Therefore, Anger and aggression are two of the novel’s consequences. Minny makes a pie for Hilly, but it is made of human faeces as a

sort of revenge (Stockett 338). The conversation between Hilly and Minny reveals that Minny makes a special pie for Hilly that is made of “human feces,” which she eats in two large slices. That action is regarded as aggression since it is carried out in retaliation for harm. Aggression is defined as an activity that harms or injures others (Lochman et al 115). Aggression, according to the definition, is not a mood but an action that causes harm to others as a result of anger.

Another facet about Minny is that she is not only a victim of racist discrimination but also domestic violence, which explains her quick impulsiveness to be defensive. Minny suffers domestic abuse at home by her husband Leroy from the beginning of the story as the reader uncovers the ugly reality of her marriage to Leroy. We learn that when Leroy returns home drunk, he smacks her around (Stockett 153). Minny is described as a powerful and vibrant lady, she is also depicted as a woman who has experienced domestic violence which is something she considers degrading to her self-esteem. Eventually, she could not live with Leroy any longer since she becomes more financially independent. Minny expresses several times her desire to be free: “I sigh. Seventy-two more hours and I am a free woman. Maybe fired, maybe dead after Leroy finds out, but free” (Stockett 2009: 71). Joseph Adam explains: “Patriarchy, the institutionalized structure of male dominance, encourages males of all races and classes to define their masculinity by acts of physical aggression and correction toward others, women and children” (qtd. in Hassan & Rashid 1).

Stockett symbolizes in Minny a social class of fearless women who have some much hate in themselves but can learn to embrace new perspectives in life. She becomes a role model for other women to follow in this story. She realizes that her society and her husband do not “know what Minny Jackson [is] about to become” (Stockett 439). She sacrificed herself to protect the other maids and her own children. In the background, one feels that there is also a part of Martin Luther King’s character present in Minny. She,

therefore, turns from an angry aggressive trait personality to a self-sacrificing character, just like that Martin Luther King.

### **3.2. Social Patterning of Aggression**

The long struggle of African Americans against Jim Crow laws is a historical event that the author includes as a plot point in *The Help*. It is a pattern of aggression that has been perpetrated on African American communities since the era of slavery. For example, Stockett describes the sit-in protest at Brown's Drug Store in her story. Minny writes: that "a bunch of white teenagers stand behind the five protesters on their stools, jeering and jabbing, pouring ketchup and mustard and salt all over their heads" (Stockett 219). The event clearly demonstrates the white teenagers' strong racist attitudes, as well as their hatred and bigotry and aggression toward Blacks. Thus, Stockett, in her text, contends that white children are taught from a young age by their parents and teachers to despise African Americans in order to prevent their integration (Sturkey, Hale 2015: 12). Then it is difficult, if not impossible, for white teenagers to overcome racial aggression patterns that have historically meant superiority to the white community.

The social patterning of aggression takes the form of a socio-economic view of classes between black and white communities. Stockett emphasizes the fact that black residents of Jackson struggle to make ends meet due to racial discrimination in the workplace is another reason for (1) how blacks are perceived as aggressive and (2) how they are the ones who suffer from such social context. African Americans in the story are only given low-paying menial jobs such as maids, charwomen, and fast-food workers. Furthermore, their white employers reinforce racial stereotypes about black people's aggression and lack of intelligence to make them work for less wages. Thus, black residents of Jackson frequently live in abject poverty in the city's poorest neighborhoods, as illustrated by a description of Hotstack, Constantine's (Skeeter's former maid)

neighborhood. Skeeter recalls walking through the neighborhood with Constantine one day, recalling “the colored five-and-dime store, then a grocer with hens laying in back, and all along the way, dozens of shabby-looking roadside houses with tin roofs and slanting porches” (Stockett 61). Living in such deplorable conditions inspires the black characters of *The Help* to seek a better life free of pain, hunger, and suffering.

Stockett gives a realistic representation of the interracial relationship between residents of Mississippi, which at the time was regarded as one of the most racially oppressive states in the United States, by combining actual historical events with fictional ones (Watson 10). To break free from the clutches of such vicious cycles of aggression, the targeted individuals must inculcate beneficial, constructive anger. Scholars have unearthed that managing cultural forms of anger can “spur an entire culture to change for the better” (DeAngelis 45), as seen in the 1960s Civil Rights Movement. According to recent research, “anger seems to be followed by aggression only about 10 percent of the time and lots of aggression occurs without any anger” (DeAngelis 44). Thus, in quoting Malcolm X, DeAngelis maintains that there is always a time and place for anger when nothing else will suffice, and that anger is not always a source of aggression.

It is less obvious whether these patterns of aggression even now reside in black communities today, but it will take a long time for such negative behaviors to disappear. The national black feminist organization, founded in 1973 to achieve political, social, and economic equality for black women, was one of the driving forces in making a case against unjustified aggression against African Americans. This organization grew out of reunions of black female lawyers, welfare rights workers, and even housewives. They organized workshops to investigate issues such as childcare, the church and education, and work and violence. Alice Walker, Margaret Sloan, Shireley Chishlom, Eleanor Holms Norton, and Flo Kennedy were among the members (Wada).

#### 4. Nature of Hatred

*The Help* by Kathryn Stockett encompasses numerous examples of racial discrimination against black residents of Jackson, Mississippi. Almost every white character in the novel is anti-integration and treats African Americans with opprobrium and loathing as if they are second-class citizens with no full rights and protections. As a result, the novel's writer strives to expose how deeply ingrained racism pervades every aspect of Jackson's segregated society. One of these psychological and social symptoms that erupted from the context of segregation and discrimination, as seen in the novel, has to do with the jumbled nature of hatred, which the author employs starkly.

Keeping up with Gordon Allport's concepts on human behaviors, he defines anger as a fleeting emotional state triggered by impeding some ongoing activity. Because anger is aroused at a specific time by an identifiable stimulus, it causes impulses to attack and injure the source of the frustration directly. Anger, hereby, is different from hatred in that anger is typically directed at individuals only, whereas hatred can be directed at entire groups of people (Allport 363). In this novel, Stockett reflects on a very specific, and largely overlooked, aspect pertaining to the nature of hatred that spurred from racial complicated doctrines. As an activist herself, Stockett's art is not created in a vacuum; it is the operation of an author who is fixed in time and space, responding to a community to which she is important. Stockett's novel serves as a sociological critique, and several of her themes of hatred are designed to condemn a cultural issue that persists to this day.

To comprehend what we mean by hatred as implied by Allport's ideas, we must first identify what he alludes to as the two facets of hatred that are inherited into society's psyche, termed as rational and character conditioned hatred.: "it is essential to distinguish between two kinds of hate: one might be called "rational," the other, "character conditioned." (367).The first type performs an important natural function. It occurs when a

person's fundamental natural rights are violated. One despises anything that threatens his own freedom, life, and values: like the case of Nazism and the justified hatred toward such political clusters (365). The second, as Allport puts it, is concerned with "character condition." The individual has a nebulous, temperamental sense of wrong that he wishes to polarize. He must simply hate something. Therefore, the individual who embraces hatred for a specific identity concocts a convenient target and justifies it like those who justify racial bigotry on a rational assessment (367). This understanding of such an extreme state of detestation towards others is synonymous with the behaviors of the two characters in the story, notably Hilly with "character condition" hatred and Minny with "rational hatred".

Hilly is a typical, fanatical White person who was raised to loathe black people simply because they are different. She is described as "one of those grown ladies [who] still dress like a little girl with big bows and matching hats" (Stockett 5). Her hatred is based on irrational sentiments of racism as she levies her justification on some features, "character conditions", of African Americans. For example, she wishes to pass legislation "that requires every white home to have a separate bathroom for the colored help" (Stockett 9). She refers to it as the "Home Help Sanitation Initiative" (Stockett 8). Her sole justification was that blacks "carry different kinds of diseases than [whites] do" (Stockett 8). She does not recognize them to be human beings with the similar agency as herself. Hence, she is held captive in "her own jail... with a lifelong term" (Stockett 444).

In the case of rational hatred, Minny is one of the maids who is shown to harbor a personal vendetta against a specific person: Hilly. However, in order to understand if it is justified that feels this way, we must look at her back-story. Unlike the other maids, Minny finds it difficult to accept her subservient role. She is assertive and retains her own set of beliefs and opinions. This is due in part to Minny's previous experiences. As she tells Skeeter, she has had many negative endeavors with white ladies that have made her life

miserable (Stockett 266), like when one of her white employers compelled her to pay more for the broken crystal glass. Even though it was snowing, the other one forced her to eat her lunch outside. Before working in Hilly Halbrook's house, the last white lady she worked for was terrible but in a bizarre way as she pressured Minny to try blue hair (266-267). However, Minny does not possess racial hatred like Hilly as she bonds with two other white women: Celia Rae Foote and Skeeter.

In fact, these unpleasant experiences shape Minny's personality and make her stand out among the new white ladies she works for. When Minny goes to work for Hilly, she is given the task of looking after Hilly's mother, Miss Walter. Minny, like Aibileen, is a caring character who protects everyone in her circle, including her white lady n regardless of how cruel they are to her. The narrator demonstrates: "The whole bus be laughing now because Minny don't like nobody talking bad about her white lady except herself. That's her job and she own the rights" (Stockett11).

Hilly, who belongs to the high discriminating category, frequently oppresses Minny in the novel. Allport reports that "there is a good reason why out-groups are often chosen as the object of hate and aggression rather than individuals" (363). Allport goes on to explain that when we consider one human being as similar to another—to oneself, it is difficult not to sympathize with the victims (364). Herein, the author employs Skeeter's character to juxtapose the character of Hilly, who is synonymous with the representation of hatred, with a character who seeks to help the maids, hence the title of the novel: *The Help*. Through her account, more than the other two, we have a glance at the perspective of a white woman who seems to oppose the norms of her time on what constitutes tolerance, empathy and responsibility for one's action. Skeeter regards her help and support to black females as her duty; she is a human assisting other humans. Skeeter is aware of the injustices that African Americans face in Mississippi, as she states, "I don't why, being



white, I feel duty to help them” (Stockett 254). Skeeter’s humanity and solidarity are also portrayed in Chapter Thirteen, when Skeeter goes to the whites’ library to bring a book for Aibileen, and she is very careful in checking books because she knows white people and their hatred for blacks, Skeeter narrates:

I spot a single copy of Frederick Douglass, an American slave; I grab it, excited to deliver to Aibileen but when I open it, I see the middle section has been ripped out inside, someone has written NIGGER BOOK [...] I am not as disturbed by the words as by the fact that the handwriting looks like a third grad’s [...] it seems better than to putting it back on the shelf. (Stockett 172)

In the story, the era’s politicized segregation escalated the sentiments of hatred between one another, whether from whites to blacks or vice versa, is resolved through cooperation and communication with one another. According to Hooks, “in order to build up a dialogue; white women have to overcome their fear and hatred of black people and vice versa” (Hooks 09).

In the story, Skeeter is not the only white woman in the novel who has shown daring support for the black maids. This speaks to an aspect about the nature of hatred that solidarity, especially female solidarity, whether black or white, in the face of racism has a tangible effect on society. As Allport contends, “there is another reason why it is easier to hate groups than individuals. We do not need to test our unfavorable stereotype of a group against reality” (367). Females bonding with one another succeed in breaking down class and racial hurdles and even transforming many white people’s minds about the reality that there is little difference between them. This idea is illustrated in Chapter 34 by the maid Willie, who works for Miss Chotard and has been there for thirty-seven years. Nearly at the end of the story, Willie and Chotrad eat together at the same table for the first time (Stockett 429).

This solidarity and communication between black and whites are depicted when Skeeter shows starts helping them in their case and also it appears when the black maids show their gratefulness and gratitude to Skeeter and accept her as one of them. This is evident when all the maids give Skeeter a signed book with their names inside telling “this one is for the white lady, you tell her we love her like she is our own family” (Stockett 398).

### **5. Character Structure “The Prejudiced Personality”**

According to Allport, an individual’s personality structure is expressed in his/her traits, and the presence of these traits encourages each individual to behave (261). Allport employs several terms that are thought to be important in determining a person’s personality, namely traits, habits, and attitudes. The three components that make up a person’s personality. Allport contends that normal humans are rational creatures governed primarily by conscious goals rooted in the present and future, rather than the past (265). Therefore, these traits are crucial in initiating and guiding adaptive behavior and expression. In Stockett’s story, writing in the voices of both a white and two black women is a difficult task in and of itself. As KingaVarga-Dobai points out, speaking for those who cannot speak for themselves often emphasizes imperialism (144). Miss Skeeter is the person who gives Aibileen and Minny voices in *The Help*, therefore, we can allude that Aibileen and Minny personality structures are only accessible to the reader through Skeeter’s voice, which may be unreliable and subjective.

One of the personality structures heavily used in the novel is how Whites are perceived to be more educated and intelligent. Herein, Skeeter represents the white and well-educated good person and is described as a hero of black people’s struggle to some extent. Miss Skeeter embodies certain characteristics of Western women’s self-representation. She is educated, has control over her own body, and is free to make her

own decisions (Mohanty 337). She is capable of writing a book. Besides, at the end of the novel, she gets a job as a writer in New York, which neither Aibileen nor Minny could have imagined. They, on the other hand, represent two variants of the Southern white construction of “colored women”. According to Mohanty, people of color are stereotyped as “ignorant, poor, uneducated, traditions-bound, domestic, family-oriented, and victimized” (337).

Aibileen is described in the novel as being tradition-bound, domestic, and family-oriented, whereas Minny is described as ignorant, poor, and victimized. Both are described as uneducated, which is supported by their language, which contains numerous grammar errors. Talib suggests that using pidgin may indicate a character’s lack of education (140). There is no dialect among the white people. This implies that being white is the norm, as Chris Weedon claims, in *Identity and Culture*, whiteness is frequently assumed to be (15). Furthermore, in the novel, Aibileen and Minny are referred to as “Aibileen” and “Minny,” respectively, whereas Miss Skeeter is always referred to as “Miss.” This implies that the maids are of lower social standing. In fact, every “colored” woman in the book is addressed solely by her first name, whereas the majority of white women are addressed as “Miss.” Moreover, the white women all appear to have distinct personality structures and whereas the maids appear to be primarily maids. The reader follows Miss Skeeter’s personal life and her life as a writer, but the reader never learns much about the maids’ lives outside of their work. Wallace-Sanders contends that “the chapters written from Aibileen’s or Minny’s points of view reflect little of their own inner lives as black women or as working mothers” (69). As a result, character structures are established from the start of the book, and as Singh and Schmidt point out, margins mark things like color, class, and social status (Wallace-Sanders 8).

However, Allport questions whether the assumed “nature of man” theory, which emphasizes the individual’s character structure, is valid in scrutinizing prejudiced personality traits. For him “only certain types of people develop prejudice as an important feature in their lives. These seem to be insecure and anxious personalities who take the authoritarian and exclusionist way of life rather than the relaxed and trusting democratic way” (216). This model recognizes the importance of early training, referring out that the majority of highly prejudiced people did not have a secure and affectionate relationship with their own parents. As a result of this pattern, they exclude and fear groups that appear less familiar and safe than their own (216). In the context of the novel, if the 16 whites are regarded as the dominant group, the colored people will never be regarded as equal. Furthermore, categorizing people into different groups is patronizing, and people are frequently marked for something that does not correspond to who they are. As Weedon points out, people frequently see themselves in a different light than those who are judging them (14). Prejudice (except if firmly ingrained in an individual’s character structure) can be reduced by equal status contact between majority and minority groups in pursuit of common goals. The effect is greatly enhanced if the contact is authorized by institutional supports (i.e., by law, custom, or local atmosphere), and if it results in the impression of common interests and common humanity between members of the two groups (Allport 281).

## **6. Dichotomization**

Humans engage in thinking in an attempt to make sense of reality as if reality is conceptual abstractions, which could make experience comprehensible. Because life appears to be too sophisticated to take in whole, it appears that dichotomized (also categorized) options, opinions, and choices come easily to mind and are accessible in any given society. Yes/no, you/me, male/female, white/black, right/wrong, and so on are

polarities that nest in the self to make a perception of the environment that is mirrored into two opposite constructions; however, while they appear to provide comfort and shelter in identifying the unknown, they also dictate a limited set of assumptions about the world. This is what in part Allport refers to in *The Nature of Prejudice*: when the subject is too overwhelmed with interpreting the difference as a sort of projection of polarization, a condition that is termed as dichotomization.

The marginalization process arises from the polar relationship between two groups of people, the marginalized and the dominant group (Sutradhar 2771). This phenomenon is effectively depicted in Stockett's novel *The Help*. Stockett described some of the polarization that occurred between whites as a dominant group and blacks as a subordinate group, resulting in black people being marginalized and segregated in all aspects of life in the United States. As the maids reveal their stories to Skeeter, she says that what surprises her most is "the dichotomy of love and disdain living side-by-side" (Stockett 258). Therefore, by referring to Allport's concept of dichotomization, we can identify when a racist culture is forced to contribute to this polarity.

If reality operates on a continuous dimension, dichotomization implies categorization, and there is a long tradition of intellectual disdain from academics for categorization. If it appears to be fine to differentiate between men and women – through this is also becoming suspect among the categorizers – it does not appear to be fine to refer categorically to ethnic groups. So, dichotomization is still wrapped in moral conscious configurations. Realizing the inevitability of categorization, theorists such as Allport and Henri Tajfel (1969) produced some of their most inspired work on stereotyping. The human mind is a categorization machine, a skill associated with the use of language in which words must refer to something. Tajfel proposed a novel theory of "accentuation" to emphasize both the benefits and drawbacks of categorization. He predicted and

(repeatedly) discovered that arbitrary cut-off points organize perception (Krueger & Clement 67). The theory of accentuation sheds light on how researchers perceive and think about statistical significance, as well as its absence.

However, we will use Allport's dichotomization to dismantle the differences that exist in one culture and are associated with two groups in *The Help*: whites and blacks. The first dichotomization can be seen in *The Help*'s relationship between blacks and the state bureaucracy, which is dominated by white people. As shown below, the relationship between the two groups yields some opposition. Whites clearly occupy their role as state apparatus, as seen in this episode. Jenkins (n.d.) explained that white supremacists believed that lighter-skinned, or "white," human races were naturally superior to other racial groups. Political leaders took the doctrine of white supremacy for granted. As a result, white supremacists gained political support in the South, and racial segregation gained legitimacy. Furthermore, during the Reconstruction period, one of Andrew Johnson's policies was to exclude African Americans and former slaves from government positions (Billington 3).

Furthermore, in the novel, white people are protected while black people are not, both in terms of security and the law. Because the Jim Crow criminal justice system was all-white (police, prosecutors, judges, juries, and prison officials), blacks had little legal recourse against these assaults (Pilgrim para 8). The following quote from *The Help* reflects this situation: "It's all them white peoples that breaks me, standing around the colored neighborhood. White peoples with guns, pointed at colored peoples. Cause who gone protect our peoples? Ain't no colored policeman's" (Stockett 196).

Apart from social norms, there are other ways to subdivide black people, such as stereotypes or assumptions that circulate in the community. These assumptions or

stereotypes could serve as the foundation for legislation that would eventually marginalize black people. Various types of opposition are generated by stereotypes, as follows: Well mannered, Clean Smart, Careful vs. black, Criminal, Dirty. The opposition demonstrates unequivocally that black people are no better than white people. They are assumed criminals, dirty, stupid, and careless in order for white people to marginalize them in various aspects of life.

Through the relationship between white employers and their black maids, Kathryn Stockett describes white people who believe that black people commit criminal acts. For example, Hilly claims that she knew her maid, Yule May, was a thief from the day she started working for her (Stockett 253). It demonstrates how easily white people stereotype black people as thieves. Callie's previous employer, Miss Margaret, always counts every sliver after Callie has finished polishing them because this assumption has grown in society (Stockett 260).

Miss Margaret does that because she assumes that every black people are thief, and she assumes that Callie might steal one of her silvers. Because of that assumption, white people use it to criminalize black people. *The Help* illustrates this through the following quote, —I'm talking about those things you wrote about Elizabeth. She has no idea Chapter Two is about her and I am too good of a friend to tell her. And maybe I can't send you to jail for what you wrote about Elizabeth, but I can send you to jail for being a thief (Stockett 441). Miss Margaret does this because she believes that all black people are thieves and that Callie might steal one of her silvers. White people use that assumption to criminalize black people. The following quote from *The Help* exemplifies this point:

I am talking about those things you wrote about Elizabeth. She has no idea Chapter Two is about her and I am too good of a friend to tell her. And maybe I can't send

you to jail for what you wrote about Elizabeth, but I can send you to jail for being a thief. (Stockett 441)

Hilly realizes she could not imprison Aibileen for what she wrote in the book. But Hilly knows she can imprison Aibileen on stealing charges, and the judges will easily believe Hilly and imprison Aibileen because the assumption that black people are thieves has grown massively in Southern society. Furthermore, during the slavery era in the United States, the stereotype of African American males as criminals was spread in order to control and discipline slaves. For example, in order to prevent fugitive slaves from rebelling, slaveholders propagated the stereotype of black males as dangerous criminals who would rape and harass innocent white women if given the chance (Barnard 3). Furthermore, Lincoln and Devah (qtd. in Quillian 107) discovered that the percentage of young black men in a neighborhood is related to people's perceptions of the neighborhood's crime level. It has become the reason why other races avoid areas with a high concentration of black men because the area is perceived to be dangerous.

Different assumptions about how other people are led to various modes of interaction. For example, someone with the attitude toward people that underpins the statement "People are no good" is likely to be suspicious and untrusting of others. The person who believes that being loved is a human need, on the other hand, has a fundamentally different relationship with people. Allport reports "the finding [shows] that most American whites believe that American Negroes are on the whole well satisfied with conditions as they are, an assumption woefully contrary to fact" (502). Many whites assume the worst in blacks for a variety of reasons, but prejudice appears to be the most prevalent feature of stereotyping. For example, regulations requiring black people to use different toilets or bathrooms are based on the assumption that black people are dirty.



The assumption that black people are dirty has been passed down from generation to generation. White parents teach their children not to use colored bathrooms because of this assumption. Miss Elizabeth teaches her daughter in *The Help* “I did not raise you to use the colored bathroom! ....—This is dirty out here, Mae Mobley. You’ll catch diseases! No no no! And I hear her pop her again and again on her bare legs” (Stockett 95). Missus Phelan, on the other hand, does the same. When her children were young, she threatened to spank them if they went into the black maid’s bathroom in their home (Stockett 60).

According to the explanation above, the dichotomization that viewed black people as different from white people, as well as those stereotypes of black people, created some prejudice. Because of stereotypes, prejudice determined how white people should feel about the existence of black people. Prejudice led to racial discrimination, with black people being discriminated against and segregated. White supremacists assigned their ideology of racial discrimination by establishing stereotypes that marginalized and placed black people in a lower position than whites. Because black people were marginalized, white supremacist ideology emerged as the victorious ideology. A winning and dominating ideology, according to Gramsci (qtd. in Faruk 143), makes adjustments to political, economic, moral, and intellectual goals in the midst of society. Racial discrimination had an impact on the legal system, norms, and understanding in southern society in this case. Hegemony occurred when white supremacists used racial discrimination to dominate the black community in all aspects of life in the South.

## Conclusions

To summarize, as with recent cases of racial discrimination against black American minorities, such as the death of George Floyd, studying prejudice closely, even via its traditional lens, provides us with a broader perspective on an increasingly divided culture. Therefore, this chapter illustrated that the dehumanization of African Americans emanates from prejudice, a deep-seated socio-cultural disease fostered by racial hegemony; the ruling class against the ruled class, the controlling against the controlled, the free against the restricted, or the voiced against the silenced. Furthermore, we attempted to show how *The Help* epitomizes a resistance to the stigma that muddled the image of the black culture for too long. By applying Allport's ideas in revealing the true nature of prejudice in such a milieu, we can add that true representation of any damaged minority can be achieved through the conception of literature, i.e., a story that brings together the scratched ones to voice themselves.

# **General Conclusion**

The novel *The Help* by Kathryn Stockett represented a realistic portrayal of American Society. It depicts African Americans' unpleasant, degrading, and painful living conditions in Jackson, Mississippi during the 1960's. It addresses the various forms of prejudice, bias, and racism that existed within the community such as blatant, systemic, and institutionalized racism. The novel demonstrated how white looked down on black maids, introducing the daily struggle of African Americans attempt to live with dignity and integrity while coping with their dreadful living conditions. Where they treated them disgracefully, making them feel inferior to white Americans. Therefore, through this novel, Stockett's intends to draw attention to the deplorable living and working conditions endured by black maids, whose lives are constantly jeopardized due to their skin color. In addition, to illustrate how deeply racism is in Jackson's segregated society, and describes the polarization between whites as dominant group and black as the subservient group, which led to black people being marginalized and segregated in all attributes of life in the United States. Hence, the purpose of this study was to shed light on the issue of white supremacy and the damaging consequences of racial prejudice behavior towards minorities and African Americans, and it examined its impacts on the main characters psyche from socio-psychological standpoint. According to Gordon W. Allport's perspective, it can be conclude that prejudice is the primary source of dehumanization of African Americans. Black people preconception and the dichotomization that saw black people as distinct from white people contributed to some discrimination. Stereotypes and prejudice shaped the attitudes that white people should have toward the existence of black people. Black people experienced racial discrimination because of prejudice, which also led to their segregation. The finding indicates that prejudice is deeply embedded in society, fostered by racial hegemony and hatred.

This research was designed as thematic, qualitative, descriptive, and analytical research. It aimed to depict the main socio-psychological issue of prejudice, as portrayed in *The Help* characters as well as analyze its effects. The research shed light on how racial prejudice was manifested on African Americans in the 1960's, and what were the socio-psychological motives that lead to it through studying prejudice closely via its traditional lens.

Ultimately, it is appropriate to note that the major research question has been answered throughout the first and third chapter. This work was analyzed by several critics with various interpretations, practically through the linguistic and historical scope while the socio-psychological perspective were neglected. Therefore, this work attempted to provide the academic branch with sociological and psychological literary criticism on Kathryn Stockett's *The Help*.

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## ملخص

يصف كتاب كاثرين ستوكيت الأول " المساعدة " مشكلة التحيز في كل مكان في حياة الأمريكيين من أصل افريقي، الذين تعرضوا للتمييز والتجريد من الإنسانية والإذلال من قبل اسيادهم البيض في الستينيات في جاكسون، ميسيسيبي في الولايات المتحدة. تهدف هذه الدراسة التحليلية والوصفية الى تحليل ووصف موقف الشخصيات الرئيسية من المنظور الاجتماعي والنفسي، وكيف تجلى التحيز والعنصرية في رواية كاثرين ستوكيت. وتحقيقا لهذا الغرض، تم تصميم هذا البحث في إطار تطبيق نظرية التحيز والعنصرية لجوردون دبليو ألبرت، ونقد التحليل النفسي لفرويد، والنظرية النسوية كإطار نظري لهذه الدراسة. تكشف نتائج هذه الدراسة ان التمييز والتحيز متجذران في المجتمع ومرضه الاجتماعي والثقافي العميق الجذور الذي تغذيه الهيمنة العرقية والتحيز بين الجماعات. تشير النتائج أيضا إلى اضطهاد النساء السود وعدم المساواة بين الجنسين التي واجهتهن من ربوات البيوت البيض والرجال السود في نفس الوقت.

**الكلمات الرئيسية:** التحيز، التمييز، الأمريكيون الأفارقة، النساء السود، علم النفس الاجتماعي