

الإساءة العاطفية من قبل أفراد الطبقة الوسطى البيضاء في رواية المساعدة

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## Emotional Abuse by White Middle Class People in *The Help*

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### الإساءة العاطفية من قبل أفراد الطبقة الوسطى البيضاء في رواية المساعدة

#### المخلص

النساء ذوات البشرة البيضاء أكثر عرضة لسوء معاملة النساء ذوات البشرة السوداء. يتجلى هذا المفهوم من خلال مراقبة سيدة سوداء حقيقية تعيش في ظل نظام السكان البيض القاسي. للتوضيح ، سيكون التركيز خلال هذا البحث على كيفية تجريد الأشخاص البيض من إنسانيتهم وإساءة معاملتهم للسود أثناء مراقبة ظروفهم المعيشية في رواية المساعدة كآثرين ستوكيت. يتم تحديد تاريخ السود من خلال سعيهم الدؤوب للحصول على حقوق متساوية مع جميع المجموعات العرقية الأخرى. وبالتالي ، فإن البيانات التي تمت دراستها في هذا البحث تتعلق بمساعدة كآثرين ستوكيت ، حيث تقدم عدة أمثلة على كيفية تعذيب السود عاطفياً واستبعادهم من المجتمع الأبيض. تحكي رواية المساعدة قصة خادمتين سوداوين يكرسان حياتهما لخدمة أسيادهما البيض. يمثل كل من ايبليين و ميني معاناة الأمريكيين من أصل أفريقي الذين يتعرضون للتمييز ضدهم ويعتبرون بشراً أقل. يوضح هذا المقال أيضاً المشكلة

العامة المتمثلة في كونك أسودًا يعيش في مجتمع أبيض وأن يكون ملزمًا بطاعة قواعد البيض. يتم عرض العقبات التي يواجهها السود في رواية كاثرين ستوكيت من خلال تحليل العلاقة بين المجموعتين. علاوة على ذلك ، يُظهر هذا البحث شجاعة النساء السوداوات في محاولة تجاوز الحدود والتحدث عن تجارب حياتهن المؤلمة. صرخة اليقظة التي قدمتها رواية ستوكيت فتحت الطريق أمام جميع السود للمطالبة بحقوقهم على قدم المساواة مع البيض. الحياة المعزولة التي يعيشها النساء السوداوات مما يجعلهم يقاتلون مثل الشخصيات الرئيسية في الرواية الذين رفعوا أصواتهم ضد تفوق الأشخاص البيض.

### Abstract

White women are more likely to mistreat black women. This concept is demonstrated by observing a real-life black lady who lives under the whites' cruel regime. To illustrate, the emphasis of attention throughout this research will be on how white people dehumanize and mistreat black people while observing their living circumstances in Kathryn Stockett's novel *The Help*. The history of black people is defined by their persistent pursuit of equal rights with all other ethnic groups. Thus, the data studied in this research pertains to *The Help* by Kathryn Stockett, as it presents several examples of how black people are emotionally tortured and excluded from white society. *The Help* tells the story of two black maids who devote their lives to serving their white masters. Both Aibileen and Minny represent the suffering of African-Americans who are discriminated against and regarded as lesser human beings. This paper also shows the general problem of being black living in a white society and being obliged to obey the rules of the whites. The obstacles that black people face are presented in Kathryn Stockett's novel through analysing the relationship between the two groups. Moreover, this essay shows the courage of black women trying to cross the lines and talk about their painful life experiences. The wake-up call that Stockett's novel provided opened the path for all black people to demand their rights equally with white folks. The segregated life of the black people makes them fight as the two main black characters in the novel who raise their voices against white supremacy.

### Introduction

The essential thing for human beings living natural lives is to get their full human rights without any discrimination. Andrew Clapham stated in his book *The American Declaration of Independence in 1776*:



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“we hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness” (Calpham, 2007, p.10). Every person on this vast planet possesses rights that would make them accessible, equal beings. All human beings should be treated equally, notwithstanding variations in their nations, races, religions, creeds, and cultures. These disparities should disappear once the laws of human rights are established. Specifically, do workers who work in the fields, factories, or houses receive good treatment from their masters? Focusing on workers in subordinate positions, they often receive lousy treatment and abuse for several reasons. To name a few, for not working as required due to their physical disability and being discriminated against because of their race, gender, and ethnicity. According to these factors, employees are affected by different kinds of abuse from their employers. Similarly, the employees are expected to bear several types of mistreatment and humiliation.

Accordingly, there are few or no differences in treatment between black males and females in the workplace. However, people of color are exposed to ill-treatment and abuse from other ethnicities. They are denied their human rights regardless of where they come from. Still, especially if they have colored skin, they are “Denied full rights and privileges of citizens, deprived equality in the courts, and restricted in their freedom of assembly and freedom of movement” (Woodward, 1955, p. 13). The white people's privilege affects blacks not just because of the difference in their physical appearance but also because they are not the actual invalids' barriers. Therefore, they are unequal and have a lower status than whites. They are concentrating on women of color who serve as maids for whites. This raises issues regarding how blacks, both men and women, are treated in the houses of white people, including whether they eat the same meals and have access to all house facilities. To make it clear, issues of inadequate treatment, white privileges, low-paid jobs, and black maids have presented in this case study example of Kathryn Stockett's novel *The Help*.<sup>1</sup> In Analyzing, Stockett's book depicts the tiresome lives of black women under the supremacy of the whites.

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<sup>1</sup> Kathryn Stockett is a writer and editor of American origin. Born in 1969 in Jackson, Mississippi, she is best known for her critically acclaimed novel *The Help*. Stockett studied creative writing and English for her undergraduate course from University of Alabama. Then she moved to New York in order to pursue work in publishing business. She shifted her interest to literary writing as she moved back to South. After





In addressing the problems that people of color, “White people have learned to believe that they have a biological right to be the leader of the world, to control and oppress Blacks, Browns, and other marginalized people” (Orelus, 2012, p.6). White people's thoughts about other groups have been the central cause of black people's suffering, and “they will continue to be brainwashed into believing that White, straight, Christian, able-bodied, privileged men were born to rule the world and others were destined to be their subalterns” (Orelus, 2012, p.6). These characteristics enabled white people to have power over black who were powerless. This means they control and dominate the life of the vulnerable, the blacks. In other words, white supremacy and prejudice ruin the lives of the people of color not to get their simple rights as human beings and create a difference in these two groups regarding the power relation between the powerful and the powerless. White supremacy may refer to the ways of dominating and exploiting the life of people of color to create a powerful, rich, and prejudiced system that makes white people superior to others. In this regard, Solórzano, D.G. and Yosso, T.J stated that it is “a system of opportunities and benefits conferred upon people simply because they are White” (2002). Chris Weedon also defines the superiority of the whites “It is assumed to be natural and the norm. This practice of assuming the universality of whiteness as a marker of the quintessentially human has deep roots in the development of Western culture since the Renaissance. One of its outcomes has been white supremacy: the belief in the natural superiority of white people” (Weedon, 2004, p. 15). Furthermore, the domination of the whites and the rules they put in place to separate their lives from black people’s lives created a white-ruled nation based on exploiting black people. Mia Bay clarified this notion: “Stripping white theories of black inferiority down to the self-interested and dehumanizing stories that gave them life, they suggested that white Americans deemed blacks a lesser species only to rationalize their exploitation and abuse of people of color” (Mia, 2000, p. 9). Black people are deprived of their rights to be respected and receive good treatment from whites. It is equally important that the living conditions of black people who traveled from Africa to America were difficult since they worked as enslaved people for the whites. They faced racial discrimination, segregation, and being inferior to white citizens in America. They are never treated equally

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five years of hard work on her personal writing project she finally had *The Help* published in 2009. Over ten million copies of the book have been sold in over 42 different languages. In 2011, the novel was adapted into a film by Walt Disney Studios. ("Kathryn Stockett | Biography, Books and Facts", 2022)





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or have the same rights as white people. Judy L. Hasday clarified the division between the two groups, “If you were black and living in the south, there were indignities to endure that were part of everyday life because racial discrimination went beyond public-school segregation. Water fountains were designated “For Whites Only” or “For Colored Only. Restaurants, theaters, restrooms, stores, buses, trains, and other public facilities were delineated based on whether you were white or black. Even walking down the street required deference to a passing white person” (Hasday, 2007). The segregation of blacks started with Jim Crow laws in the late 1870s, enforced on black people until it became a derogatory code for them when he specifically said, “separate but equal.” Jim Crow’s set of rules separated the two groups based on the race they belonged to prevent any contact with white people. As a result, black people continue to suffer due to not having equal opportunities and restricted lives, ultimately pushing them to the margins of society. In this regard, the issue of eliminating black people from sharing public facilities with white people and denying them access to education and jobs significantly impacts their ability to be accepted as members and have equal rights and chances with their white counterparts. As has been noted, Americans of African descent fall victim to race and racial stratification. This causes a difference between people based on their skin color and life level.

African Americans in the United States have unbearable living conditions in a place where they expect to have a better life away from their country. Nevertheless, since they arrived in the sixteenth century with the first enslaved people in 1619, they faced a harsh life with the supremacy of white people who contemptuously viewed them. Mia Bay describes the thoughts of white people and the cruel practices of blacks “in the United States, where African-Americans would live as a racial minority set apart by law, class, and condition from a highly color-conscious white majority” (Mia, 2000, p. 4). The blacks work in plantations, and they become slaves to the whites. American white citizens are granted the ownership of black people to work for them and obey their orders. Men and women of color are undertreated by their white owners. They attempt to make them work as hard as possible so that a black person must "serve to distinguish him from the white man." (P. Tidyman). The whites insulted, oppressed, and even violently treated the blacks; they treated them unfairly and cruelly. The contradiction of superiority and inferiority is best applied to the relationship between whites and blacks. Whites were biased towards blacks in several aspects of life, not just one. They place stringent



regulations on their personal and professional life. As though they should serve and obey whites. Jefferson addressed this distinction in *Notes on Virginia* as Mia Bay., “as a suspicion only, that the blacks, whether originally a distinct race, or made distinct by time and circumstances, are inferior to the whites in the endowments both of body and mind.” (Mia, 2000)

The status of black people has a long history. Their migration has no end as they keep transforming and purchasing from land to land several times. This horrible experience makes them every time become the property of a different new land. To demonstrate, the African people's lives are tightly controlled by the new strange place and unwillingly distributed. This is clear from the beginning “where did the enslaved people who arrived in America go? The vast majority, approximately ninety-five percent, were distributed to Latin America and the Caribbean societies. Only about five percent ended up in the British colonies of North America, or what is now the United States” (Robin D. G. Kelley, 2000). Black people face race and class discrimination since they are dominated and controlled against their will. They are sold for a small amount compared to a white worker. Additionally, black workers endure more complex work than their white counterparts. Employing such harsh conditions, for many black people, racial equality remains a distant dream. The exploitation of people of color does not happen in a vacuum. It results from an oppressive system that believes white is able-bodied and privileged while other groups are their subalterns.

### Overview of Stockett's novel *The Help*

Jackson, Mississippi, is Kathryn Stockett's hometown, and it is here that she chose to write her well-written and joyful piece of literature. *The Help* was written in 2009, became a *New York Times* best-selling book for about two years, and its subsequent film in 2011. It is based on her life experience with the essential topics she tackles. It has been translated into many languages. In this way, Stockett reflects on the way of life in Jackson, Mississippi, in the early 1960s, when the Civil Rights Movement started gaining momentum and caused a noticeable change in the United States. One of its leaders, Martin Luther King, Jr., suggested that he deliver a speech called later "I have a dream" for the effect it left on the people's minds and also because it left an imprint on the long history of fighting for equality during the March on Washington in 1963, he said “I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character....one day [all] little Black boys and Black girls will be able to join hands with little white boys and white girls as sisters





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and brothers (Tikkanen, A. 2021). He longed for a time when there would be no division between whites and blacks. He struggled for equality in America, an act that inspired people of color and gave them hope for a better future.

However, the story's setting is where racial prejudice still disproportionately affects black people. At that time, laws and restrictions were enacted against black people, and they were viewed as a minority of advocates for freedom and the abolition of slavery, disenfranchisement, inequity, and the rejection of Jim Crow Laws, along with several other necessary demands. *The Help* addresses several important topics, including social and political challenges. This fictional work portrays prejudice in the American South. The emphasis on racial discrimination in employment results from Stockett's personal experience, as she strives to illustrate cross-race subjects to emphasize the unequal lives of black people to promote anti-racist ideas.

African Americans during that time were regarded as the lowest class, one of the eccentric elements that Stockett focuses on in her novel. In the novel's events, black people face racial discrimination and segregation as they are pushed to the margins of society. Yanick St. Jeans stated in his book this distinction "By white racism, we mean the socially organized set of attitudes, ideas, and practices that deny African Americans (and other people of color) many of the opportunities, freedoms, and rewards that U.S. society has to offer white Americans" (Yanick St. Jean, 2015) Additionally, they are compared to white people physically and mentally as they have no power, stupid, dirty, and illiterate. So, they lack the excellent capabilities that white people have. As a result, Stockett attempts to write and explain how black people are excluded in many ways, as well as describe their struggle to gain equal rights to white people. In her novel, Stockett creates the black characters to represent a helping code for the glorious life of white people.

This novel primarily focuses on the relationship between white and black regarding the differences in social conditions, race, and cultural backgrounds. The book illustrates this relationship by black maids working for white southern families in America. To make it clear, the novel's storyline is narrated by three protagonists: Eugenia Skeeter Phelan, Aibileen Clark, and Minny Jackson. Skeeter is a white, ambitious woman who aspires to be a journalist and to take the risk of writing a book about how privileged white families treat black women unequally. Kathrin makes Skeeter's character the only white woman in the novel who tries to talk about the struggle of the blacks and, in return, pushes them to raise their voice to end their suffering.







Aibileen and Minny are maids destined to help white women in their houses and cook, clean, and take care of their babies. In “Every Child Left Behind. The Many Invincible Children in *The Help*” Wallace-Sanders indicates the way that black women are depicted in the novel “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” (Wallace-Sanders, 2014). Stockett deals with problems blacks face as the white writer tries to deliver their suffering in a fiction story, telling their own stories and experiences with white families. Furthermore, Stockett demonstrates various examples of white supremacy and prejudice toward black. Moreover, Stockett depicts the actual image of black women and their misrepresentation over the past several decades in the United States since they encounter a double burden of facing race and gender discrimination. Kathryn wrote her novel right after the tragic events of 9/11 because this event gave her the motive to write her memory with Demetrie (the black maid who raised her after her parents divorced). In an interview, she stated: “I started writing in her voice because it felt soothing. It was like talking directly to her, showing her that I was trying to understand, even though I would never claim to know what that experience was like. It's impossible to know what she felt like, going home to her house, turning on her black-and-white TV. And I'm not saying I feel sorry for her, because she was a very proud woman” (Day, 2011).

As an illustration, through her influential novel, as a white American woman, she demonstrates her rejection of racial discrimination or any other kind of abuse or cruel practice against black people. Dimitrie’s voice keeps echoing as she is writing the novel, turning to build the character of Aibileen. She added, noting in an African accent, “It wasn't hard for me to get that musicality on the page because I started writing the voice of Demetrie, and she sounded exactly the way I wrote her. Later, that voice became the character of Aibileen” (Day, 2011). Moreover, the novel is such a challenging task that it mainly depicts the unbearable living conditions, humiliation, and underestimation of black people in the 1960s in Jackson, Mississippi. Equally important, in forming the character of Skeeter, Kathryn represents her inner feelings and sympathy for the suffering of the black maid. Kathryn makes her protagonist as strong as she is in talking about race issues, even though this can put her in danger because she wants to make black people speak out through her book. It also emphasizes the possibility of friendship developing between the two people rather than hatred, such as the close relationship between the black maids, Aibileen and Minny, and the white





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woman, Skeeter, who aspires to write a book about them. Despite her white identity and still acting and talking like a white person, Skeeter does not mind conversing with and being close to black people. Also, in the novel, Minny and Celia's friendship crosses lines. It breaks the stereotypical codes of the differences between African American maids and white Americans, as Minny assists Celia with housework while also allowing her to sit and eat with her at the same table. From this, we can see a glimpse of hope that racial discrimination can diminish through the growing relationships between the two groups.

### **Emotional abuse in *The Help***

Prejudice, discrimination, exploitation, segregation, emotional abuse, hatred, and mistreatment. These words are all linked to the relationship between whites and blacks—the ongoing problem of race and power relations between the two groups. Thus, Stockett's *The Help* contains numerous instances of white prejudice against Jackson, Mississippi, black residents. Most white characters in *The Help* show hatred and bias towards the other groups. The whites are anti-black and treat them with scorn and complete disdain. They regard them as second-class citizens with no equal rights. As a result, the novel's writer intended to highlight the deep-seated racism in Jackson, Mississippi, and the never-ending obstacles that hinder black people from living a decent life with respect. Stockett's sketch of Demetrie's way of living in a society surrounded by white people delivers a precise and actual picture of how black women's role as domestic servants was treated somewhat like slaves, and they were not given privacy or comfort.

In the South, where the novel takes place, black women work as maids in white households. Indeed, every white family has a colored maid. They regard the blacks as property. Furthermore, white people allow themselves to keep abusing black people emotionally, and they take control of their lives. The novel portrays how black maids get unfair treatment at the hands of whites. Because black people are fewer creatures than whites, the way they live, the food they eat, the tools they use, and even the place they live are all determined by white people's rules. This leads to unequal distribution based on the people's skin color and categorizes them into groups depending on their outside appearance. For example, in *The Help*, the blacks live in an isolated place away from the whites; as Aibileen mentioned, "Jackson's just one white neighborhood after the next and more springing up down the road. But the colored part a town, we one big anthill, surrounded by state land that ain't for sale. As our numbers get bigger, we can't spread out. Our part a town just gets thicker" (Stockett, 2009). This reveals that blacks are



exposed to exclusion from white people's areas. They are not allowed to live with them in the same part of the town, "The colored part of town seems so far away when it's only a few miles from the white part of town" (Stockett, 2009). These examples clearly show the prejudice of the whites regarding colored people as inferior to them. As the novel stresses, many topics are about how racism affects people of color and how they are objectified and marginalized due to their skin color. Thus, the two black narrators give reliable facts about African-Americans' hardships in a mixed-race community. Women of color are abused by white women for several reasons, as Chandra Talpade Mohanty's analysis of third world women or colored women shows, as "ignorant, poor, uneducated, tradition-bound, domestic, family-oriented, victimized" (Mohanty, 2003, p. 22) compared to white women who are "educated, as modern, as having control over their bodies and sexualities and the freedom to make their own decisions" (Mohanty, 2003, p. 22). This distinction demonstrates the lower position that black women are obliged to be in. Although black domestic workers are uneducated and unaware of their rights, they dare to take the decisive step and talk about their continuous suffering. In this case, the author of *The Help* placed a strong emphasis on depicting the harsh realities of black maids who work for white Messapian families. Through Stockett's white protagonist and a fictional novel, she tries to talk about the history of black maids and gives hope to black people who cannot speak and demand their rights.

Stockett's motivation for writing such a book and taking the risk of writing about such a story created Eugenia "Skeeter" Phelan's character to document the suffering and misrepresentation of black women from their perspective. Minny Jackson illustrates how Skeeter's book helps talk freely without being punished or alienated "Every time we meet, I complain. I moan. I get mad and throw a hot potato fit. But here's the thing: I like telling my stories. It feels like I'm doing something about it. When I leave, the concrete in my chest has loosened, melted down so I can breathe for a few days" (Stockett, 2009, p. 100). Although Minny feels she is doing something wrong and forbidden as a black maid, talking about the injustice they get from their white masters, she appears as an outspoken woman who gives herself hope that someday things will be changed. They will be on an equal rank with white people. Hence, Skeeter's idea of writing the book about the mistreatment of black maids in her town for Minny and Aibileen is a savior to their suffocating lives under the prejudice and the emotional abuse they encounter every day of their lives. In addition, their employers exploit black female servants for their limited opportunities and unbearable situations in white homes.



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Aibileen's role as a domestic servant is illustrated in her words "Mae Mobley was born on an early Sunday morning in August 1960. A church baby, we like to call it. Taking care of a white baby, that's what I do, along with all the cooking and the cleaning. I raised seventeen kids in my lifetime" (Stockett, 2009, p. 6). This quote represents the only job offered to black women to serve in white households and care for their children. As the novel explores the lives of black maids leaving their houses to go to white people's homes to raise their children, while white mothers are busy taking care of their beauty and establishing their own business, "But Miss Leefolt, she don't pick up her baby for the rest a day. I seen plenty women get the baby blues after they did birthing" (Stockett, 2009, p. 6). However, black women's efforts with the children will vanish as soon as they grow up because they are taught to hate, dehumanize, and oppress the blacks. To clarify, Mae Mobley's teacher, Miss Taylor, implanted racist ideas in her mind when she asked to draw something she liked on a piece of paper, and she drew herself but painted it in black color. She said, "Black means I got a dirty, bad face." (Stockett, 2009, p. 183) This is what Miss Taylor taught her, that black people are dirty and inferior to us.

Moreover, Tayler J. Mathews and Glenn S. Johnson stated that "blackness was a sign of shame, immorality, and unpleasantness" (Tayler J. Mathews, 2015, p. 251). Those with white skin are ascribed positive characteristics, whereas those with dark skin usually are put into stereotypical subgroups and judged harshly based on their physical appearance. The white prejudice life shows how they care about physical appearance more than personality in judging people's lives, as the white is superior and the black is inferior.

In this instance, the work elaborately explores segregation issues to offer readers a depiction of racial discrimination during the era of Jim Crow legislation. Whites generally embraced the concept and the new laws that divided people of color. As Stockett represents the isolated life of the black maids, they are not permitted to use white people's facilities to avert disease outbreaks. Hilly Holbrook's suggestion of a separate bathroom for blacks, she says in the presence of Aibileen, "That's exactly why I've designed the Home Help Sanitation Initiative ... As a disease-preventative measure." (Stockett, 2009, p. 9) She intends to degrade black maids and talk without caring, even if her words hurt their emotions. She added, "A bill that requires every white home to have a separate bathroom for the colored help. I've even notified the surgeon general of Mississippi to see if he'll endorse the idea." (Stockett, 2009, p. 9). Miss Hill's statement indicates that she will send her suggestion to see if it is accepted, and then it will be popularized by health specialists. In the





novel, for example, when Mae Mobley uses Aibileen toilet, her mother, Elizabeth Leefolt, says, “I did not raise you to use the colored bathroom!” “This is dirty out here, Mae Mobley. You’ll catch diseases! No, no, no!” (Stockett, 2009, p. 47) Mrs. Leefolt is an example of how white people treat their black maids and emotionally abuse them by regard them as dirty and holding diseases. As a result, whites' primary interest is to reinforce the concept of segregation and prevalent racist behaviors and attitudes in the minds of their children. Thus, this situation demonstrates how racism is passed down from generation to generation due to adults' prejudiced attitudes towards blacks.

On the contrary, Aibileen, as a black maid, suffers from discrimination and alienation. She tries to teach Mae Mobley equality and tells her that everyone is the same. The following dialogue expresses the spirit of equality in Aibileen's mind when she tells the baby a story to resist the racist ideas in her mind.

“Once upon a time they was two little girls, one girl had black skin...one girl had white skin, little colored girl say to the little white girl „how come your skin be so pale?” white girl says „I don’t know how come your skin be so black? What you think that means”? but neither of them little girls knew, so the little white girl said, well, let’s see, you got hair, I got hair, I got a nose, you got a nose, I got toes, you got toes”, so we’re the same. Just different color,” says the little colored girl. The little white girl she agreed, and they were a friend” (Stockett, 2009, p. 92)

This story indicates the hope of the blacks to deconstruct racial categories and the prejudice of the whites and gain their full rights as equal human beings. This also stems from Stockett's spirit to help the blacks achieve equality and live in a country where they would not face any kind of discrimination. Aibileen, in the novel, is treated unequally. That makes her tell her real-life story about the harsh treatment and humiliation of the whites. But with this fact, black maids are expected to love their white families and devote their entire life to satisfying their white employers and doing their everyday chores. In contrast, the whites unappreciated the efforts and kept abusing them all the time. This results in bad feelings and increases the sense of inferiority to Aibbilen by comparing herself to an insect, a black cockroach worth nothing like her. "That night after supper, me and that cockroach stare each other down across the kitchen floor" (Stockett, 2009, p. 88). She describes the cockroach as contrasting herself to someone equal to her "He big, inch, inch and a half. He black. Blacker than me" (Stockett, 2009, p. 88). In this scene, Aibileen and every black person living in Jackson, Mississippi, experience lower self-esteem due to their skin color.







## Emotional Abuse by White Middle Class People in *The Help*



To add more to the suffering of black people, the separate public facilities show how the whites bother the blacks by alienating them. The novel portrays this in education, hospitals, voting, libraries, and public transportation like buses. Using a conversation between Aibileen and Miss Hilly from the book about separating whites and blacks at school as an example, "Aibileen, you wouldn't want to go to a school full of white people, would you?"... And I say polite as I can, "Not a school full a just white people. But where the colored and the white folks are together."... "But *Aibileen*"—Miss Hilly smile real cold—"colored people and white people are just so . . . *different*." (Stockett, 2009, p. 86) Miss Hilly's words, in fact, emotionally abused Aibileen for making a distance between the two groups. As the people of color are not allowed to study in white schools, as Aibileen hopes in the quote above, they can study together. In Aibileen's words, the sense of love for their counterpart does not exist in white people's hearts.

### Conclusion

In this study, *The Help* raises awareness of the problem of white authority and the damaging outcomes of racist behavior toward blacks by examining the deplorable conditions of life and work faced by black maids, whose lives are constantly threatened because of their skin color. Kathryn Stockett elucidates in her novel the plight of black maids, how they are majorly affected by white supremacy, and the various types of abuse experienced by black people in Jackson, Mississippi. The novel and its award-winning film adaptation focus on the constant battle of African Americans with white folks and society. Thus, the problem of exclusion and disapproval of "women who are conspicuously branded as "dark-skinned"; they are stereotyped with undesirable and dismissive traits that can result in having different life experiences than their lighter counterparts" (Tayler J. Mathews, 2015, p. 260). Therefore, in Stockett's book, black women act as an awakening to the racial prejudice committed by white people who make their black counterparts assist them and raise their children. Still, they do not treat them equally and continue emotionally abusing them. Through analyzing the novel in shedding light on the poor treatment of the whites, this paper tries to give the readers the most problems that black people faced in a country that welcomed racial discrimination and regarded white people as the norm while the blacks were the other.



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