

The help analysis paper



The Help Is an American novel that represents an era of civil rights, written by the point of view of a white educated southern woman, in a very different time period of what the book is set in. The Help takes place during the 1960's in Jackson, Mississippi. This novel tells a story about the relationships between African-American maids and their white employers. During the 1960's, not only in Mississippi but the greater part of the south, African-American women were the nannies and maids to white families for generations and dealt with racism in order to earn an income for their own families.

The Help not only touches on a racist time era but a sexist one as well. In The 60's women were to be mothers and housewives but some wanted to be more than that, this novel tells another story about a young educated southern woman trying to achieve a career in a male dominant profession.

The author is Kathryn Stockett, a white southern woman from Jackson, Mississippi.

She grew up in Jackson with her own African-American nanny who died when she was sixteen. She narrates The Help as two African-American maids and one young white woman; all live and grew up in Jackson, Mississippi.

Stockett's point of view in this novel is that she was one of those many children in the South that had a second mother who was black and wanted to tell those nanny's stories on behalf of her own deceased nanny. She makes the two African-American narrators the protagonist, Aibileen and Minny, and the young white women, Skeeter, is also a protagonist who wants to tell the truth about Jackson, Mississippi and does so by convincing Aibileen and Minny and others to tell their stories about being nannies to white families.

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The Help was published in 2009, the year Barack Obama took office. 2009 was an important year for America; it was the year that the first African-American president took office. During the campaign a lot of racial tension started rising, even though America had changed drastically since the 60's there were still some old ignorant views. This book was written during a time when America had progressed for the better but its individuals hadn't. The campaigning of president Obama could have reminded Stockett of how much America has changed in such a short time but how some people hadn't.

Kathryn Stockett wrote this book because she felt that she needed to tell the story of the African-American maids and their white employers relationship. It was written to tell the truth of Jackson, Mississippi in the 60's, to make America aware of what was going on down in the south during that era. Kathryn admits in an interview that she herself was at one point in her life prejudiced but she also states how much she loved her own nanny Demetrie, who raised her till she was 16. Stockett wrote this book so that people could speak about race in general, people avoid the topic because it's a sensitive subject that many individuals find uncomfortable or better left unsaid.

The Help takes an individual back in time to an era of racism and puts the reader in the shoes of two southern black maids and a young educated white woman. This novel brings the reader to realize how much the world has changed and how much society has as well. In less than 60 years America has gone from strict segregation to having a black president in office. The Help also takes the reader back to a time of sexism, when women were to be doting housewives and child bearers. This novel shows how young Skeeter

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was too educated for her mother's liking and was constantly being haggled to settle down at the age of 23 and find a husband, except she wanted to become a writer, a man's profession in the 60's. Today in America a woman can do anything she wants, no matter her race, as long as she has the right education and determination.

" Mississippi Goddam" By Nina Simone, 1964 The name of this tune is

Mississippi Goddam

And I mean every word of it

Alabama's gotten me so upset
Tennessee made me lose my rest

And everybody knows about Mississippi Goddam

Alabama's gotten me so upset
Tennessee made me lose my rest

And everybody knows about Mississippi Goddam

Can't you see it
Can't you feel it
It's all in the air
I can't stand the pressure much longer

Somebody say a prayer

Alabama's gotten me so upset
Tennessee made me lose my rest

And everybody knows about Mississippi Goddam

This is a show tune

But the show hasn't been written for it, yet

Hound dogs on my trail
School children sitting in jail
Black cat cross my path

I think every day's gonna be my last

Lord have mercy on this land of mine
We all gonna get it in due time
I don't belong here
I don't belong there

I've even stopped believing in prayer

Don't tell me
I tell you
Me and my people just about due
I've been there so I know

They keep on saying " Go slow!"

But that's just the trouble
" do it slow"
Washing the windows
" do it slow"
Picking the cotton
" do it slow"
You're just plain rotten
" do it slow"
You're too damn lazy
" do it slow"
The thinking's crazy

“ do it slow”

Where am I going

What am I doing

I don't know

I don't know

Just try to do your very best

Stand up be counted with all the rest

For everybody knows about Mississippi Goddam

I made you thought I was kiddin'

Picket lines

School boy cots

They try to say it's a communist plot

All I want is equality

for my sister my brother my people and me

Yes you lied to me all these years

You told me to wash and clean my ears

And talk real fine just like a lady

And you'd stop calling me Sister Sadie

Oh but this whole country is full of lies

You're all gonna die and die like flies

I don't trust you any more

You keep on saying “ Go slow!”

“ Go slow!”

But that's just the trouble
 " do it slow"
 Desegregation
 " do it slow"
 Mass participation
 " do it slow"
 Reunification
 " do it slow"
 Do things gradually
 " do it slow"
 But bring more tragedy
 " do it slow"
 Why don't you see it
 Why don't you feel it
 I don't know
 I don't know
 You don't have to live next to me
 Just give me my equality
 Everybody knows about Mississippi
 Everybody knows about Alabama
 Everybody knows about Mississippi Goddam
 Art, music, and literature express a time period's essence by using lyrics, images or words to depict what's going on in that era and to preserve it for the future. They teach people of that certain time and in the future by telling a story lyrically or the artwork represent something that happened back

then. The song “ Mississippi Goddam” uses lyrics such as “ Just give me my equality” to tell the audience of the African-American struggle to gain equality in the segregated south.

Individuals can look back at artwork and music to learn what was going on during that era by the stories the artwork, literature and music tells. Artwork, literature, and music represent the way the composer of the work felt about the time period and how the individual wanted to express their true feelings to an audience who felt the same way. Or the individuals wanted to educate and bring a community to the attention of the issues going on at that time.

Sources: