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Abstrak

Penelitian ini menganalisa tentang penindasan interseksionalitas yang dialami oleh Wanita Afrika-Amerika dalam novel *Hidden Figures* karya Margot Lee Shetterly. Diskusi akan berfokus pada bagaimana penindasan interseksionalitas yang dialami oleh karakter wanita Afrika-Amerika digambarkan dalam novel, dan bagaimana karakter wanita Afrika-Amerika menentang penindasan tersebut. Feminisme kulit hitam menjelaskan bahwa wanita Afrika-Amerika adalah sebuah kelompok yang unik karena adanya titik pertemuan antara ras, jenis kelamin, kelas sosial, dan aspek identitas lainnya. Pemikiran Feminisme kulit hitam milik Patricia Hill Collins dan Interseksionalitas milik Kimberle Crenshaw digunakan untuk mendukung studi ini. Studi ini memberikan dua kesimpulan, pertama, penggambaran penindasan interseksionalitas ditunjukkan dalam bentuk pemisahan rasial dalam konteks bangunan dan fasilitas umum, penilaian negatif, dan pembatasan kesempatan dan otoritas. Kedua, wanita Afrika-Amerika menentang kondisi penindasan tersebut dalam bentuk tindakan eksplisit berupa menjauhkan diri mereka dari lingkungan opresif, dan tindakan implisit berupa mengubah pesan dan penilaian negatif menjadi motivasi.

Kata kunci: interseksionalitas, penindasan, wanita Afrika-Amerika.

Abstract

This study analyzes the intersectional oppression experienced by African-American women in Margot Lee Shetterly's *Hidden Figures*. The discussion will focus on how the intersectional oppression towards African-American women characters was depicted in the novel, and how African-American women characters resist against the oppressive condition. Black feminist describes African-American women as a unique group where intersectional processes of race, gender, social class and other aspect of identity is occurred. Black Feminist thought by Patricia Hill Collins and Intersectionality by Kimberle Crenshaw are used to support the study. This study provides two conclusions, first, the depiction of the intersectional oppression is shown in the form of racial segregation of building and public facility, negative judgements, and limitation of chance and authority. Second, African-American women resist against the oppressive condition by taking action explicitly, such as distancing themselves from the oppressive environment, and implicitly, such as turning the negative messages and judgement into motivation.

Keywords: intersectionality, oppression, African-American women

INTRODUCTION

The life of African-American women was always been an interesting issue to be discussed. They are in a high-risk position of being oppressed because they suffer a combination of racism and sexism at the same time. They suffered racism that done by White society (men and women), and sexism that done by White men, but also by their own community that is Black men (Sidanius & Veniegas, 2000). This case is also called as Intersectional oppression, a term that coined by Kimberle Crenshaw. Intersectional oppression happen when someone, people, or group of people face the oppression because they have multiple aspects of identity such as sex, gender, race, social class, nationality, etc., and those aspects are intersecting.

The lives of African-American women today are affected by enslavement history in United States which

involved Black people as the slaves. When Black men were exploited for their work, Black women were not only valued for their work, but also their ability to produce more workers. In other words, Black women were sexually exploited so they can give birth to more children that later sold and used as slaves in order to continue the slavery heritage. An enslavement history in U.S. contributed on creating a condition that disadvantages black women. As a result, U.S. culture with its ideology of racist, sexist, and classist affect the perception of Black women. Therefore, Black women become victim of both racist and sexist oppression, which create a double burden for them.

This study uses the novel *Hidden Figures* by Margot Lee Shetterly. It is published in 2016. Shetterly is inspired to write her book through her life experience. Her father was one of NASA's employee. Her surroundings was basically black people who worked in

science, math, and engineering. What attracted her most was the fact that there were many Black women employees in NASA who were hardly recognized for their contributions to the agency's long term success. They faced many obstacles in their workplace related with racial oppression and discrimination. She put Black women as a center of the novel not as the margin, and not because they were Black or they were women, but because they were part of the history (Shetterly, 2016).

The novel is based on the phenomenal true story of the black female mathematicians at NASA whose calculations helped some of America's greatest achievements in space. It tells about the journey of African-American women who worked in National Advisory Committee for Aeronautics (NACA) at Langley Memorial Aeronautical Laboratory in Virginia around 1950s. It also tells a journey of African-American women who worked at NASA as human computer who later became engineer and mathematician. NASA used the term 'human computer' for employees, especially for women employees, whose jobs were to do the data and number calculation for engineer and other divisions. They only used pencils and adding machines to calculate the data that later used for launching rockets and astronauts into space. Their career in NASA was not going quite well, because they had to face many challenges and obstacles, such as oppression and racial discrimination.

The settings took place in Virginia around 1950s. At that period, Virginia was one of the states in U.S. that enforced segregation law between black and white people. As a result, NASA also enforced the rules which impacted the placement of African-American women who worked there. There are special building for them which called as West Area. Nonetheless, African-American women employees took action against the oppressive condition. They resisted it by starting from small actions such as defying the segregation rules, to bigger actions such as proving to everyone that they were good enough for putting men on the moon.

There are three most significant who portrayed in the novel. They are Dorothy Vaughan, Katherine Johnson, and Mary Jackson. Dorothy Vaughan was an African American mathematician who became acting supervisor of the West Computing Area and an expert programmer in FORTRAN. Katherine Johnson was an African-American physicist and mathematician who contributes in United States' aeronautics and space programs. She also contributed in trajectories, launch windows, and emergency back-up return paths for Project Mercury, including the NASA missions of John Glenn and Alan Shepard, and Apollo 11 mission to the Moon, through the Space Shuttle program. Katherine Johnson

had already showed her genius by attending a high school in campus of West Virginia State College at the age of 13 and college at the age of 18. Mary Jackson was an African American mathematician and aerospace engineer at the National Advisory Committee for Aeronautics (NACA). She became the first NASA's black female engineer. Their early career in NACA was being 'human computers', which contributed in mathematical calculation only using pencils and adding machine to calculate the numbers that would launch rockets and astronauts into space.

This study focuses on the intersectional oppression that were experienced by African-American women in the novels. The characters were limited on three African-American women who mostly portrayed in the novel. They are Dorothy Vaughan, Mary Jackson, and Katherine Johnson. The analysis will be about the conflicts and issues related to the oppression upon African-American women and the resistance done by them.

The theory that will be used are Black Feminism by Patricia Hill Collins and also supported by Kimberle Crenshaw with her idea, Intersectionality, because it deals with African-American women and the oppression they experienced. Black Feminism by Patricia Hill Collins is chosen because she is the first Black Feminist scholar that combines race, gender, and social class and calls it as Paradigm of Intersectionality. She also insisted that those aspects are intertwined that makes Black women become the most marginalized group (Collins & Smith, 2013). Intersectionality by Kimberle Crenshaw is chosen because the oppressions towards Black women as a result of the intersection of their multiple aspects of identity are different from what Black men and White women experience.

Those two theories are related because Intersectionality is a field that understanding that individual's oppression will be different with other's because they experience multiple and intersecting oppression at the same time. In this case, intersectional oppression as a result of the intersection of gender, race, and social class are happening at the same time and it makes black women's struggle is different than white women's.

This study deals with the intersectional oppression experienced by African-American women characters in the novel. It will focus on how the intersectional oppressions towards African-American women depicted in the novel and how they resist against the oppressive condition.

There are some previous study that will be used to support this study. "Powerlessness and Anger in African American Women: The Intersection of Race and

Gender” by Shirley A. Thomas (2011), “Hidden Figures: The American Dream and the Untold Story of the Black Women Mathematicians Who Helped Win the Space Race; Rise of the Rocket Girls: The Women Who Propelled Us, from Missiles to the Moon to Mars” by Jennifer Levasseur (2017), “Dominant Cultural Narratives, Racism, resistance in the Workplace: A Study of the Experiences of Young Black Canadians” by Julian Hasford (2016).

METHOD

This study uses four steps to discover the depiction of Intersectional oppression experienced by African-American women in the novel and the resistance that done by them. The first step is reading the novel in order to collect the data. The second step is selecting and quoting the data based on the proposed question. The data are taken from the quotation, sentences, and phrases in the novel. The third step is analyzing and classifying the data by using theoretical framework. The last step is concluding the finding results.

There are some points that help to understand about the concepts of intersectional oppression experienced by African-American women. Those are Black Feminism theory, Intersectionality, and the concept of oppression and resistance.

Black Feminism

Black women often or even frequently experience multiple oppressions result in needs, expectations, ideologies, and problems that are different than black men and white women (Collins & Smith, 2013). Black feminist thought focuses to empower African-American who faced social injustice caused by intersecting oppressions. Since black women cannot be empowered unless intersecting oppressions are eliminated, Black feminist thought supports broad principles of social justice beyond U.S. Black women's particular needs. Black feminist thought describes African-American women as a unique group where intersectional processes of race, gender, class and other aspect of identity is occurred. It is growing together with black women's historical events of slavery, segregation, and Black Movements (Collins, 2000).

The arise of Black feminism incessantly happened around 1960s, when Civil Right Movement excluded Black women from the formal leadership position due to patriarchy system in society. It was also when common Feminist movement seemed not include Black women's demand into their agenda, and put interest only on White women issues. In addition, Black feminism started to get spotlight when Second wave Feminism occurred in

1960s. Feminist history was known for three periods; First Wave, Second Wave, and Third Wave.

Martha Rampton, a Professor of History in Pacific University, in her journal *Four Waves of Feminism* (2016) explained the main differences of each Feminism wave. The first wave of Feminism began at late 18th until early 20th century. It focused on paving a way of opportunities for women on suffrage and gender equality. Mostly, the participants came from White, middle-class, well-educated women, nonetheless there were women of color who also participated such as Sojourner Truth and many others. Second wave Feminism began around 1960s until 1980s. While First wave Feminism's context focused mainly on suffrage and gender equality, Second wave Feminism focused on the consciousness of sexuality, family, inequality in workplace, and reproductive rights. Women of color and Third-world are the one that initiated the Second wave feminism. Second Wave feminism also connected with other movements that happened around 1960s and 1970s which were Civil Right and Black Power Movement. In the middle 1990s, Third Wave Feminism began with the privilege of First Wave and Second Wave feminism had fought for (Rampton, 2016).

Patricia Hill Collins, an American sociologist and expert in Black Feminism field, in her book *Black Feminist Thought: Second Edition* (2000), stated that Black Feminist is not only becomes a critical theory for fighting a justice for Black women, but also for another oppressed group. There are two factors that stimulated Black feminism as critical social theory. The first one, before World War II, racial segregation in neighborhood became so enrooted that most of African-American women lived in Black neighborhood where their children also attended black school and they themselves belonged to Black churches and other similar Black organization. The second factor is, also before World War II, Black women worked in two fields of occupation: Agriculture, and Domestic work. In a domestic work field, Black women was allowed to meet their White elites, but there is one point that must be underlined is, even though they can see each other, Black women are still considered as the outsider. They themselves knew that they could never belong to their White families (Collins, 2000).

Collins states that women are the most marginalized in society especially black women because of their oppression along with race and gender that show the unique characteristics of this group. She insisted these three dimensions intertwined made Black women the most marginalized group. (Collins & Smith, 2013) The struggles of Black feminist have become an appropriation by White women's movement. Mireille Hutchinson conclude in the end of her book entitled *Black and White*

Feminism, a Post-Colonial Vision (1972) that instead of striving and enlarging the gap between Black feminism and White feminism, the agenda should focus on studying the problem of discrimination of all women in order to build a global feminist theory (Hutchinson, 1972).

Intersectionality

Intersectionality is a social study that discusses intersection of some aspects of identity that creates a multiple oppression and discrimination. It focuses on how social, biological, and cultural categories of identity such as race, gender, sexuality, social class, and other, are combining and later contributing on social inequality. It was Kimberle Crenshaw who introduced it into feminism field in 1989. Crenshaw used American Black women as a case of Intersectionality. Black women whose identities are intersect with race and gender often got oppression caused by racism and sexism, while Black men are oppressed because of their race, and White women are oppressed because of their sex.

Crenshaw analogized the oppression that happened to Black women with the traffic accident that happen in intersection. If there is an accident in intersection, it is caused by the cars that coming from at least two directions. It is similar with what happens to Black women. They are basically oppressed by their gender and their race. The main point is Black women can experience discrimination in any number of ways (Crenshaw, 1989). In her opinion, Black women become special because it is not only by the way their identity and their oppression experiences are overlapping, but also their history which includes enslavement, Civil Right Movement, Black Power Movement, and Feminism Wave (Smith, 2015).

Intersectionality in feminist field becomes a powerful key to conceptualize the relation between oppression system that constructs the multiple aspect of identity and the power and privilege in society. In an interview with Equal Right Trust, a foundation whose mission is to fight discrimination and promote equality for all areas of life, Crenshaw considered Intersectionality as a term that covering the fact that oppression system is not singular; in fact, they are overlapping and intersecting in the same way as the power does. She used the lawsuit of Emma DeGraffenreid versus General Motors Assembly Division as the example of Intersectionality. It is about a case of Black women who were segregated by their race and gender in job field. That case also delivers facts that jobs that were appropriate for Black men were not appropriate for Black women, and jobs that were appropriate for

women were not appropriate for Black women. The gender logic put women in a position of front office job, and racial logic put Black people in a bottom of work hierarchy. Those two logics put all women and all Black in a powerless position, but the worst impact is in Black women which become having no chance in the industry (Crenshaw & Schulz, 2016).

The Concept of Oppression and Resistance

Oppression generally means creating an injustice situation for individual, group, or culture by a privileged group. Individual or group experience oppressive condition because they are part of a group that share different characteristic (race, gender, class, sexuality, nationality, etc.) from the privileged group. The privileged group have more control power and the world admitted their position as 'the ruling group'. In other words, oppression means people treat other people in dehumanizing way, and it can cause the oppressed group have a limited access to education, job, and other opportunities. The examples of oppression are racism, sexism, classism, and anything that relates with the aspects of identity (Young, 2004). Discussing oppression means discussing about one group's privileges and other group's disadvantages at the same time. Talking about the disadvantages of being women in economy, social, and political sectors also means talking about the privileges of being men in patriarchal systems. Talking about a racial discrimination that a certain group experiences also means talking about the privilege that the dominant group has.

Oppression becomes more complex and greater when intersectionality is included which is how multiple aspects of identity (race, gender, social class, nationality, etc.) are intersecting (DB, 2012). Patricia Collins, Black Feminist scholar, presented the case as Matrix of Domination. The concept itself refers to how the intersecting oppression is organized and developed. Later, Collins merges the Matrix of Domination with Kimberle Crenshaw's term Intersectionality, since Intersectionality is a condition when aspects of identity is joined and worked together to produce oppression itself (Collins, 2000).

Resistance is an act of defying an oppressive condition. Resistance itself cannot be separated from oppression, since resistance is a result of oppression. As explained above in Oppression section, oppression happened when there is certain individual or group who were discriminated by race, gender, social class, nationality, etc. Oppression caused the minority group lives as outcast and damaged their live because oppression limited their chances and capacities to grow and develop. By that, the minority group has an obligation to resist the oppressive condition, because they always have two

choices dealing with the oppressive condition: accept the fate and reinforce the oppression, or take an action to fight it (Cudd, 2014). The oppressed group shows their resistance by walking out and distancing themselves from the oppressive environment, or having pride from their oppressed identity and using it as a weapon. Mostly, the oppressed take the second method to fight the oppressive condition, not only to get rid of the oppression, but also to show and prove to anyone especially to the oppressor that they are good enough (McDonald, Keys, & Balcazar, 2007).

As explained above, there are possibly two forms of resistance that the oppressed group does in order to overcome the oppressive condition. The first one is walking out of the oppressive environment. The oppressed party likely choosing to distance themselves from the oppressive environment because they think that they neither deserve the unequal treatment nor had to stay oppressed (McDonald, Keys, & Balcazar, 2007), (Hay, 2011), (Hasford, 2016). The second one is to take action. There are various forms of taking action in order to combat the oppressive condition. The first one is the oppressed group refuses to obey the oppressive rules. The second one is the oppressed group uses insult and negative messages that they get as a motivation to prove to the people that they are capable of being better than them. The third one is the oppressed group reassuring and motivating themselves that they are capable of being success (McDonald, Keys, & Balcazar, 2007), (Hay, 2011), (Hasford, 2016).

ANALYSIS

The Depiction of Intersectional Oppression towards African-American Women in the Novel

In this section, the analysis will focus more on how the intersectional oppression depicted to the African-American women characters. Katherine Johnson, Dorothy Vaughan and Mary Jackson are three of African-American women employees who were frequently portrayed to be the victim of intersectional oppression in the novel. The intersectional oppression itself depicted in three form, which are racial segregation of building and public facility, negative judgements, and limitation of chance and authority.

The first depiction of intersectional oppression experienced by African-American women in NASA is racial segregation of building and public facility. Shetterly explained in her book that there were many kinds of job for Black women. She added there were three levels of jobs. Being a servant for White people, working in a laundry, and working in tobacco plantation were considered as 'common jobs'. Working in post

office, owning a store, and working as porter in Pullman were considered as 'good jobs'. Being a teacher, doctor, or lawyer were considered as 'very good jobs'. But, having a job in NASA was something new, which might be classified as 'marvelous jobs'. Because it is their first time having Black women as their employees, NASA had to adjust their regulation related with the arrival of Black women in their institution (Shetterly, 2016).

Melvin Butler knew that NASA needs a separate space for Negro women in Langley's office. ... Integrating Negro women into Langley's office was something that he really never imagined before. Even though it was not the first time having Negro employees in the Lab -janitors, cafeteria workers, and groundskeepers-, but having Negro as professional was something new. (Shetterly, 2016, p. 7)

The passage above implies that one of the intersectional oppressions Black women employees experienced is in the form of building segregation. Dorothy Vaughan is one of the building segregation victim. Dorothy Vaughan was a black woman mathematician who later known as NASA's first African-American supervisor. She was known for expertizing FORTRAN language programming and mastering IBM operation. On her first day at Langley, she felt nothing unusual with the building she was in. The building areas were not different from other building. It had the same appearances; same narrow windows, same ceiling lights, and same desk arrangement styles. The differences between other buildings at Langley and the one Dorothy walked into was the women who sitting behind the desks. Her room consisted of Black women. As a result of segregation rules in NASA, Langley office was divided into two areas; West and East. East Area was a place for all white employees, and West Area was for the Black ones.

What Dorothy and other Black women employees experienced is called intersectional oppression. Intersectional oppression happens when race, gender, social class, and other identity aspects are combined and it creates a situation that disadvantaged them. Kimberle Crenshaw analogized a case of intersectionality as traffic in an intersection. If there was an accident happened in that intersection, it can be caused by the cars that come from two direction, or from all of the direction. Similar to Black women, they were oppressed either by their race or their gender, or both of them, because they were in the intersection of identity aspect (Crenshaw, 1989). Deborah King in her article *Multiple Jeopardy, Multiple Consciousness: The Context of a Black Feminist Ideology* (1988) stated that all women are downgraded based on

their gender. Meanwhile, Black women might face additional challenges because their race are also downgraded. This multiple oppression creates a unique space for them in society (King, 1988).

According to Gina Miranda Samuels, in her article entitled *Identity, Oppression, and Power: Feminisms and Intersectionality Theory*, Intersectionality suggests that gender cannot be explored alone without exploring how other identity aspects, such as race, social class, sexuality, etc., bear on one's experience as woman (Samuels & Ross-Sheriff, 2008). However, the placement of Black women in a separated place was not only because the segregation law, but also the racism that expressed in the form of stereotypes and prejudices, that White people think Black women were not good enough to be employed as mathematician and engineer, as told in the passage above. Patricia Hill Collins in her book *Black Feminist Thought* (2000) stated that institutionalized racism for African-American women were still visible. It was designed to create inequality treatment. Moreover, racial segregation was deeply enforced in employment. Racism for African-American women was always been enemy in everyday situations (Collins, 2000).

Another case of racial segregation rules for Black women employees is the separation of building facility, such as bathrooms, cafeteria, etc. There was special section for Black women employees at the back of cafeteria. Every facilities in the buildings are racially marked, even the bathrooms and cafeteria.

The word "colored only" that written in a white cardboard sign on a table at the back of West Area cafeteria become a barrier between black and white computers. (Shetterly, 2016, p. 43)

The social hierarchy put Black race at the bottom of American Society and it was rooted in the nation's history. While White men were placed below White men, African-American women were placed at the lowest due to the subordination of White and Black men. The social status of African-American women were placed as the lowest rank also due to the America's historical event of slavery. As a result, the idea of equality becomes hard and almost impossible (Delastuti, 2017). African-American women who worked in NASA were discrimination in the basis of sex and in the basis of race. They might be equally respected in the context of intelligence and brilliancy, but it all changed when they entered the buildings, cafeteria and bathrooms. The sign 'colored only' seems like a harsh reminder that even when President Franklin D. Roosevelt prohibited racial discrimination in workplace and promoted equal opportunity employment in United States by signing

Meritocracy of US Civil Service and Executive Order 8802, which says "there shall be no discrimination based on race, gender, color, or origin, in the employment of workers in defense industries and government"; some people were more equal than others (Executive Order 8802: Prohibition of Discrimination in the Defense Industry, 1941)

"Excuse me, do you know where the ladies room is?" Mary asked to some East computers. They were giggling for a second.

"We have no idea where your bathroom is." They emphasized the word 'we' and 'your', then continued their giggles.

The nearest bathroom was unmarked. It is certainly available for White women, but not for Black women. (Shetterly, 2016, p. 108)

The racial segregation of bathrooms also became one of the bitter experiences for Black women employees in NASA. Mary Jackson was one of Black women employees who experienced it. Mary Jackson was a Black woman who worked in NASA as human computer at West Computing division since 1951. Her career in NASA was not only being human computer, but later became NASA's and America's first female African-American aeronautical engineer. Two years after Mary Jackson joined West Computing Area, Dorothy Vaughan assigned Mary to assist on a project in East Computing Area. The computing work was a routine for her, but East Area's building was not so familiar for her, that's why she asked the East computers to show her the way to the bathroom. The moment they laughed at her, her dignity is gone. It felt like she wasn't good enough to piss at the same bathroom as them. She was downgraded from a professional mathematician to second-class human being, only because she was black.

Racism is expressed by the oppressor, either by the individual or the institution. It is in the form of prejudice, stereotypes, and discrimination. And Black women who work in NASA would always face the oppression since the institution they were working at enforced the segregation law. In addition, a double burden of racial and gendered discrimination in workplace is related to a potential source of stress for Black women (Evans & Herr, 1991).

The second depiction of intersectional oppression in the novel is negative judgement toward African-American women employees. Katherine Johnson was one of African-American women employees who experienced it. Katherine Johnson was a mathematician in NASA who contributed in John Glenn's orbital trajectory calculation for Mercury Seven mission and calculation for Project

Apollo mission to the moon. She was one of the three Negro students who graduated from West Virginia State Institute with the highest grade. She later applied a job in NASA as human computer and joined West Computing area. In 1953, two weeks after Katherine Johnson worked in Langley, one of the Flight Research Division employee came to West Computing area and requested new temporary computers. As a result, Dorothy Vaughan as a West Computing area manager selected Katherine Johnson, since she was one of the greatest employees Dorothy had ever have. Being selected for new computer in Flight Research Division was not only a big chance, but also a challenge for her because she would join one of the most prestigious groups at the Laboratory which mostly consisted of white people.

As Katherine surveyed her new office, she occupied an empty cube next to an engineer. She organized her belongings and greeted the man beside her with a smile. Before she could open a conversation, the man walked away and gave her unamused glance without spoke any word. The conception, judgement and injustice treatment based on one's race, gender, or social class also became Black women employee's daily enemy in NASA. In other words, the intersection of race and class make White society think and make assumption about Black people that they are underprivileged and unintelligent. Some interpretations running crossed Katherine's mind. It could have been an interaction between a professional and a sub professional, or because she was woman and he was man, or even because he was White and she was Black. No matter how smart and clever Black women mathematician in NASA, like Katherine, Mary, and Dorothy, as long as their complexion was still dark, they will be haunted by the demon called racism and discrimination.

The third depiction of intersectional oppression in the novel is in the form of limiting the chance of authority for Black women. It happens to Mary Jackson when she was promoted to be an engineer. In NASA, engineer was a main figure behind the space race. The engineers were the one who decided the problems to investigate, gave direction to the craftsmen who made the spaceship models. They were also the one who gave the computers the task to calculate the number for the trajectory. Becoming an engineer was absolutely hard for everyone, especially for Black women like Mary Jackson.

Mary Jackson's boss suggested her to attend engineer training program. She knew that country's top engineering school didn't accept women, especially for her who was Black woman. Her journey to attend the engineering program won't be easy. She would definitely need a

petition from city of Hampton to allow her to attend classes in white-only schools. (Shetterly, 2016, p. 144)

Black women face the powerlessness that limit the chance and access to authorizing resources such as salary, education, employment, etc. It is caused by the intersection of racism and sexism that contribute to their authority limitation (Thomas, 2011). Iris Young in her article with the title *Five Faces of Oppression*, many women of color still have to fight for their way in order to get respectability and recognition from the society. The respectability itself intersects with race, gender, and social class since those aspects are kind of the first things the society see from them (Young, 2004).

It also happens to Katherine Johnson who wants to attend editorial meeting at that time. She spent four years doing monotonous calculations in Flight Research Division, and her desired grew into an ambition to attend editorial meeting, a session where engineers examined the preliminary research reports that they applied to the aircraft they engineered. However, having a 'computer' in an important occasion such as editorial meeting was something that was not happened before, especially for Black woman like her.

"Why can't I attend the editorial meetings?" Katherine asked. She really wanted to be a part of 'a main event'. They were going to test her numbers after all.

"Girls can't attend the meetings." Katherine's male colleague told her.

"Is there any protocol against it?" Katherine talked back.

"It's just the way things are." He retorted. (Shetterly, 2016, p. 179)

Shetterly explains that there was not a law or protocol that restricting the computers to attend the meetings. But, there were laws that rule Black people like her to which bathroom she can use, which cafeteria she can eat at, and which fountain she can drink from. It was deeply rooted and implemented of not having a woman, specifically Black women, in the meetings. Women would always be in men's blind spot, invisible and undiscovered, unless the engineer made convincing reason to evaluate women as their partners (Shetterly, 2016). Kimberle Crenshaw, the founder of the term Intersectionality, stated that the experience of oppression towards African-American women is unique and different than other because being both female and Black. As a result, African-American women with its intersectionality challenge all forms of discrimination.

They were isolated and needed to defend for themselves (Crenshaw, 1989).

Additionally, Iris Young explained that the idea of powerlessness is related with Karl Marx's theory of socialism. The ruling group dominates the powerless one in the form of giving them order and they have to do it because they have no choice or have no right to disobey. Some of common injustices treatment related with the powerlessness are having no right to decide or choose something, getting disrespectful treatment because of the lower status, and having minimum capabilities to grow and skills development (Young, 2004).

The depiction of African-American women's resistance against the oppressive condition in the novel

In this section, the analysis will focus more on how the African-American women characters show their resistance against the oppressive condition. Black women characters in the novel are oppressed by race, gender, and social class and they were classified as Black feminist. Black Feminist thought intent on empowering Black women by raising their self-consciousness to fight and show their resistance against the oppression. There are two depiction of African-American women employees' resistance against the oppressive condition in the novel. First, they take action explicitly by distancing themselves from the oppressive environment, and the second, they turn negative messages that discourage them into motivation and encouragement.

NASA enforced the segregation law due to the government's command. It affected the separation of White and Black/Colored facilities, including buildings and the most underrated places such as bathrooms and cafeteria. Black women employees were offended by the colored computers sign at the cafeteria because it was placed inside the laboratories, a place that they were selected by their intelligences.

It was Miriam Mann who took the first step to face the inequality. She would walk around the back of the cafeteria, then took the cardboard sign and put it into her bag. It was also the time when her West Computer fellows felt both anxious and inspired because of her sense of defense. (Shetterly, 2016, p. 44)

Miriam Mann was a Black woman who joined NASA as mathematician in 1943. Like other Black women mathematician, she was placed in West Computing area and worked as human computer. Dealing with oppressive condition, the lives of Black women were always offered with two choices. It is either they would stay silent, or they would fight. Miriam Mann knew, this time she would, and had to fight. Black women employee

in NASA might accept the fact that they were racially separated, but as long as West Computing area was still existed, they would prove to anyone that they were equal. Even the smallest action like what Miriam did can gave her and her West Computer fellow some dignity and confidence. Intersectionality taught women, especially Black women, that not all women had the same experienced of womanhood. Some women experienced multiple oppression, but not all women are considered as weak and powerless (Samuels & Ross-Sheriff, 2008).

According to Patricia Collins, the point of Black Feminist Thought is to empower African-American women to fight the inequality. The empowerment is happened when they understand and conscious that they should change their life. Every idea and consciousness from one Black woman will be something essential and it might influence Black women around her who have the same journey as her (Collins, 2000).

One day, Mary led a vocal group of Girl Scout. They sang a part that implied the harshest judgments of what Black women could be –slave-, Mary stopped the choir and said “we will not sing this song ever again!” (Shetterly, 2016, p. 98)

The consciousness itself can be manifested in action caused by something that bothers their dignity. In Miriam's case, it is caused by the sign ‘colored only’ that somehow irritated her because in the place that required high intellectuality like NASA, they were still become the outcast. While in Mary's case, it is caused by the song lyric the Girl Scout sang “Pick Ball of Cotton” that contained the negative stereotypes of what Black women would be which was becoming the slave. That's the time when their consciousness was built and they took an action that later empowered other Black women. They believed that sometimes the biggest battle to protect their pride and dignity was come from the simplest and smallest actions like what they did.

Another form of resistance that done by Black women employees in NASA was doing the protest by defying the segregation rules. In 1954, Katherine officially joined the Flight Research Division. Her colleague, who were mostly white men, was fascinated by her brilliant talent in mathematics and calculations. Although she felt ‘rejected’ by her White colleague the first time she arrived there, she still loved her new office. In fact, the guy who gave her unpleasant response was later became her friend.

Katherine loved being in Flight Research Division. The atmosphere was so pleasing. Despite the fact that the racial restriction was still enforced, she won't let it limiting her movements and chance. She used the unmarked bathrooms, which

implicitly designed for White employees, because she didn't see the reason why she can't use it. She ate her lunch at her desk, because it also contributed on cutting down her interaction with the segregation rule. (Shetterly, 2016, pp. 129-130)

What Katherine did was one of the resistance forms commonly done by the oppressed, which was refusing to obey the oppressive rules. The reason why the oppressed are obligated to resist the oppression is because oppression damaged someone's rational capacity. It means when someone's capacity is prevented from functioning in a normal way that can threaten their future, and also when someone's capacity is unfairly restricted that can put them in disadvantages (Hay, 2011).

The oppressed naturally have the sense of resisting the oppression. When the oppressor might tell them that they can't achieve something, or throw negative messages to them, they will turn the discouragement into motivation. Patricia Collins stated that a key to empowering individual and group of Black women is self-consciousness. When individual's consciousness collected and become a collective group consciousness, it is possible to resist the oppression, because it is the key of Black women survival in daily struggle against the oppressive condition (Collins, 2000).

In 1958, West Computing group was dismissed. Nine Black women employees who still remained as West Computers employees until the day it was dismissed were permanently joined another section such as engineering group. All the West Computing group alumni would never forget the place that made them to be in their position now despite the oppressive condition they experienced.

Katherine Johnson, like any other Black women in NASA, always had a faith to hold onto her life: once you were brave enough to take a first step, the next will always be possible. It'd be simple, just like sending man into the Earth's orbit, or putting man into a moon. (Shetterly, 2016, p. 246)

In the end, by the success of Apollo Mission, they proved to anyone about their greatest achievement, both in Black community and in the whole society. That is also become the most epic resistance done by Black women employees in NASA. The live of Black women are always familiar with negative judgments. Instead of giving up their dream, they turned the negative judgments into motivation and paved their way to the success story. They would tell and assure themselves that they were capable of being success regardless of what other people said about them (McDonald, Keys, & Balcazar, 2007).

CONCLUSION

Hidden Figures by Margot Lee Shetterly has become something that has a special place in reader's heart especially for the African-American women and also for women of colour. It is a story about braveness, hope, and proof from those who are oppressed. They proved to the world that among the harshest reality (racial and gendered segregation), there were light at the end of the long and dark tunnel. They believed that their hard work and talent could take them out of sorrow and brought them to victory. There are two statements of problems dealing with the novel. The first point is how the intersectional oppression of African-American women was depicted in Margot Lee Shetterly's *Hidden Figures*. The second point is how African-American women resist against the oppressive condition in Margot Lee Shetterly's *Hidden Figures*. Based on the findings and data analysis, there are two points as the conclusion in this study.

The first point focuses on analysing the intersectional oppression that experienced by Black women characters in *Hidden Figures*. Katherine Johnson, Mary Jackson, and Dorothy Vaughan are some of Black women character oppressed by their race, gender, and class, which classified as intersectional oppression. The intersectional oppression itself depicted in three forms. First, it is depicted as racial segregation such as building and public facility separation. When Black women employee arrived for the first time as professional peers, the building and facilities are racially separated due to government's rules. Second, it is depicted as the negative judgments such as underestimated prejudices and treatments. Third, it is depicted as limitation of chance and authority.

The second point focuses on analysing the resistance against the oppressive condition that done by Black women characters in *Hidden Figures*. The resistance itself is depicted in two forms of action. The first one is taking action explicitly. Miriam Mann resisted the oppressive condition by remove the racial sign in cafeteria. Mary Jackson contributed in resisting the oppressive condition by command her Girl Scout to stop singing "Pick Ball of Cotton" because it implies the negative stereotypes of Black women's future. Katherine Johnson also contributed by disobeying the segregation rules when she was transferred to East Computing building. The second form of resistance done by Black women characters against the oppressive condition is turning the negative messages into motivation and encouragement. Mary Jackson didn't lose hope when she got complicated process of getting permission to continue her education program in white-only school. Katherine

Johnson, as usual, always reassured herself that everything is possible if she had a will.

SUGGESTION

At last, hopefully there are more researches and studies that discuss *Hidden Figures* as data sources. *Hidden Figures* is a novel that rich of topic discussion based on the lives of African-American women in dominantly White people workplace. There are more issues such as female bonding among Black women in NASA and the role of Black women in NASA as Black Feminist that can be discussed for the future researchers.

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