

Main Character's Motivation As Her Needs To Fight Against Discrimination In Kathryn Stockett's The Help

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Abstract

This research discusses about The Motivation of the main character .by seeing how she treat the black maids with great courtesy and due respect. in helping the black race, especially the maids in a city called Mississippi. The literary work that will be analyzed is a novel by Kathryn Stockett entitled The Help. Stockett brought an issue about the discrimination of colored people that they're having in set 1960s. It was written in 2004, with set 20th century when United States still go through the role of racism and discrimination. In early 1960s, the partiality to the black race, they build a strict boundaries between white and black people. As a matter of fact there was rules that differentiate the race, such as black people can't use the same facilities like bathrooms, drugs, even cinemas. This research applied a descriptive qualitative technique with The Help novel related journals as the primary data. To help investigate the main character's motivation, this research uses Abraham Maslow's Motivation Theory, Hierarchy of Needs. There are five hierarchy of needs that could trigger Human's Motivation, such as: Physiological, Safety, Social (Belongingness and Love), Self Esteem, and Self Actualization Needs. The result of this analysis shows that The Help novel by Kathryn Stockett portrayed that these human needs leads to Skeeter's motive to write the book and fight against discrimination in her hometown which her motivation is driven by Social Needs, also to fulfill Self Esteem and Self Actualization needs.

Keywords: Discrimination, Hierarchy of Needs, Motivation, Maslow, The Help, Stockett.

Introduction

This study is a psychological analysis that focuses on motivation of The main character in a novel by Kathryn Stockett entitled "The Help". It was written in 2004, with set 20 th century when United States still go through the role of racism and discrimination. The novel picturize the controversial happened in early 1960s, the partiality to the black race, they build a strict boundaries between white and black people. The aim to this research is to reveal the motivation of the main character that made her decided to start making a move of their action. In order to get more understanding about human's motivation, the writer interested to conduct the analysis of Skeeter's motivation using Maslow's theory, Hierarchy of needs. By analyzing this novel based on human's hierarchy of needs, it is believed that every good action of Skeeter which comes from strong intention would produce good things in the society, and the result is beyond helped not only the black maids, but the whole community. Maslow's theory digs human's motivation from the very basic needs first, then move up to higher or bigger desire, this theory can help the writer in explaining about Skeeter as a human being who has needs to be fulfilled in her life.

The writer uses psychological approach which helps to analyze Skeeter's motivation. Psychology and literature has deep correlation in human life which both deals with human

behaviors, expression, thought, and motivation. Kartono believes psychology as the science of human behavior (Kartono, 1980:94). In the novel, Skeeter's psychological states from the beginning until the middle of the plot affected her motivation in starting her measure with the maids. the writer aims to dig more and reveal Skeeter's motivation which what triggered her to do what she did in the first place, by using this approach.

Motivation is encouragement or factors that encourage someone to do something purposeful to influence his behavior to do something to achieve certain goals or outcomes (Ngalim Purwanto, 1988). Henry Murray as quoted in Worchel and Shebilske (1989: 406) stated that some people are brought by a motive to do things as soon as possible. This means people are motivated to achieve something such as their dreams or goals. In this case, similar to Skeeter's story, in what motivates her to help the maids, one of it is to reach her dreams becoming a successfully writer.

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs. According to Abraham Maslow there are 5 hierarchy of needs: Physiological needs, Safety needs, Social needs, Self esteem needs, Self actualization needs. Maslow (1938) believed as quoted in Huffman, Vernoy & Vernoy (2000), that the strongest needs must be satisfied first before one can move on to the higher needs. This means Human's behavior is controlled based on what are the needs they need to achieve and fulfill, whether intentionally or unintentionally. realize it or not, all of our actions have motive that makes us triggered to do it.

Discrimination this study discuss about what motives the main character has to fight the discrimination, in *The Help* novel which happened to the African-American in the southern United States around the time 1960s. According to Theodorson, Discrimination is the unequal treatment of individuals or groups on the basis of some, usually categorical, attribute, such as race, ethnicity, gender, religion, sexual orientation, age, or social class membership (Theodorson, 1979). Meaning that discrimination is an unfair treatment and attitude to certain groups from the others. In Mississippi, discrimination can easily be found by Stockett's description on how all the black race women are working as maids for white people families, from teenagers to elders.

Method

This research uses primary data as the data source, which is the novel of *The Help* by Kathryn Stockett and secondary data which are related books and journals such as psychological theory books, motivation theory. Library research is applied to conduct a research by collecting information from books and journal articles related to the analysis. In this research, the writer uses descriptive and qualitative technique which it will describe the phenomenon that occurred in this research by available resource. The writer collecting the data by applying several technique steps, which are reading and understanding the novel including the content inside it by paying attention to details of the novel, Gathering all the data and giving marks on particular parts that refers to the main character's motivation.

Identifying the data that have been collected and implementing the theory used. In this step, the writer process the data based on the theory used and the discussion arranged. The analysis is started from the structural analysis of the study to the psychological analysis of the literary work. after all of the data are collected, the writer started to analyze the novel using the theory of Abraham Maslow, Hierarchy of Needs.

Findings and Discussion (Times New Roman, 13, Bold)

In Maslow's theory of hierarchy of needs, there are 5 hierarchy of needs. It is a stratified need in which the achievement must be gradual from the basic to the highest level, From the five hierarchy, the stronger needs must be satisfied first before a person can move to the higher needs (Maslow, 1987). The discussion related to Skeeter's motivation to fight against discrimination that is affected by the hierarchy of needs.

Physiological needs is the most basic and urgent human needs, because it aims to sustain the life of human (Maslow, 1987). the writer could see that Skeeter came for a wealthy family. Skeeter's family drove across the town to go to the yard. It could be seen from the description above that when Skeeter and her family arrived at the cotton's plantation, they were surrounded by it. This showed the wealthy of Skeeter as well as the fulfillment of her needs, such as shelter and resting, through her family's cotton fields. Hence, the writer believed that the data above showed that Skeeter had fulfilled her physiological needs.

Safety and Security Needs. According to the theory of Maslow, when they physiological needs are fulfilled, human have the need for safety and security. The safety and security needs include the feeling of secure and safe related to health, resources, financial, environment, as well as personal security (Maslow, 1987). Skeeter did not feel like the other "white girl" who had beautiful appearance, and that feeling was there since she was born. Therefore, she tried to dressed up like a white girl and had a type of white-girl-room, as her effort to seek for the feeling of secure and safe in her surroundings.

When Skeeter was 14, Skeeter secretly smoked cigarettes. She used to slipped into the backyard then sit in the swing wile smoking. Even though her mother did not know that, her help, Constantine, knew immediately. However, Constantine said nothing to Skeeter's mother and even sometimes helped Skeeter when she almost got caught. It then made Skeeter felt safe and secure around Constantine, because Constantine understood her and could keep her secret.

The safety and security needs include the feeling of secure and safe related to health, resources, financial, environment, as well as personal security (Maslow, 1987). It is in line with the interpretation of the datum above, where Skeeter felt safe and secure around Constantine.

Belongingness and Love Needs. The sense of belongingness and love can include the friendship, family, and sexual intimacy (Maslow, 1987). It means that human will need the sense of belongingness and love from their friendship, family, as well as partner. If the needs of this social, love and belonging is not exist, the person can feel loneliness, anxiety, stressful, and depression.

Even though her engagement has been canceled because Stuart didn't like Skeeter published the novel about the maids, her heart found something else to love, Skeeter often came to Constantine's neighborhood to play with Constantine and Constantine's friends, as explained in datum 9. Through the datum above, the writer interpreted that Constantine felt the sense of belongingness and love as Constantine's friends accepted her and was very friendly to her. Considering that, the writer believed that Skeeter's needs of belongingness and love had been fulfilled well.

Maslow explained that self-esteem needs refer to the needs when a person wants to achieve high positive value of themselves. This needs can also include the needs to achieve more in life, such as more achievement, more power, more knowledge, more confidence, more value, more strength, and even more freedom (Maslow, 1987). Her mom always wanted her to be like the other women, who worked as a banker and already got engaged or married. However, Skeeter wanted to pursue her dream, which was becoming a writer

and chasing her diploma. She even worked hard and moved out to pursue her dream. It showed that Skeeter had improvement in her life, in terms of the needs to achieve more in her life. Hence, Skeeter showed that she had successfully fulfilled her self-esteem by being confident and wanting to achieve more value, strength, and freedom. Skeeter wanted to interview Aibileen about what it feels like to work as a colored people. From the first hearing that, Aibileen was not sure about that because it was a dangerous thing to do. From that, it is safe to say that Skeeter had the needs to achieve more power and value. Therefore, the writer interpreted that Skeeter had fulfilled her self-esteem needs.

The final hierarchy is self-actualization needs. It refers to the need of a person to become the full potential self and make the most out of her/him (Maslow, 1987). There were many obstacles that could have stopped her, but she kept trying even though what she tried to do is impossible and dangerous, Skeeter still tried to make it happen. The writer interpreted that in the datum above Skeeter tried to convince Missus Stein by trying to make her bring back her interest. She tried to find ways to put her writing, could be an article, magazine, or others. What Skeeter done above showed that she had successfully filled her needs of self-actualization.

Conclusion (Times New Roman, 13, Bold)

In conclusion, based on all the interpretation above, the writer has found that Skeeter's self esteem needs motivated her to find her strength, improve her skills and compensating her insecurities through it. Meanwhile growing up, Skeeter's self actualization needs motivated her to write the book because she believed in her purpose of life. In her belief, the discrimination and segregation that happened in town is unjustifiable, she thought someone had to start doing something against it, and eventually she gathered the courage to be the one to do it. It was small doings, but the people started to discuss about the discrimination and in the end opened up people's mind and brought a change to the discrimination in town, even just a little bit. It was a beginning of something new.

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