THE MEANING OF EUGENIA “SKEETER” PHELAN’S ACTION TO HELP AFRICAN AMERICAN MAIDS AS SEEN IN KATHRYN STOCKETT’S THE HELP

A SARJANA PENDIDIKAN FINAL PAPER

Presented as Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
to Obtain the Sarjana Pendidikan Degree
in English Language Education

By
Sandra Yulidar Putri Iriandini
Student Number: 101214113

ENGLISH LANGUAGE EDUCATION STUDY PROGRAM
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Approved by

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May 25th, 2015
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Dean,

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MY FRIENDS
And MYSELF
STATEMENTS OF WORK’S ORIGINALITY

I honestly declare that this thesis, which I have written, does not contain the work or parts of the work of other people, except those cited in the quotations and the references, as a scientific paper should.

Yogyakarta, June 10th, 2015

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101214113
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ABSTRACT


The Help, Kathryn Stockett’s debut novel, tells about a young white American woman, named Eugenia “Skeeter” Phelan, and her relationship with two black maids, Aibileen Clark and Minny Jackson, during the civil right era in 1960s in Jackson, Mississippi. Eugenia is a journalist who decides to write a book from the point of view of the maids, exposing the racism they are faced as they work for white families.

The objective of this study is to reveal the true meaning of Eugenia “Skeeter” Phelan’s action to help black maids reveal their experiences of working for white families. There are two formulated problems in this study namely, “How is Eugenia “Skeeter” Phelan’s personalities described in the novel?” and “What is the meaning of Eugenia “Skeeter” Phelan’s action to help African-American maids reveal their experiences of working for white families?”

This study applied library research. The primary data was obtained from the novel entitled The Help by Kathryn Stockett. The secondary data were taken from other relevant sources, such as related books, journal and the internet. The approach used in this study is Psychological approach. The theories used are the theory of Critical approach to literature, theory of character and characterization, theory of motivation and the theory of social structure.

There are two findings in this study. The first finding is the personalities of Eugenia “Skeeter” Phelan. She is shy about her appearance, kind, brave, and curious. The second finding is the true meaning of Eugenia “Skeeter” Phelan’s action towards black maids which reveals the reality of life about slavery era is still taking place in the U.S in 1960s.

It can be concluded that the slavery era still exists during the civil right era in 1960s in the U.S. This slavery era reminds us as human beings to remember that job is a job, and it has something to do with human rights. It is suggested for the next researcher examines the motivation of Treelore in dreaming of writing a book. This novel can be used as the material to teach prose because in literary work we can find true English dialogues, cultures, settings of English people.

Keywords: Action, African-American maids, novel, The Help
ABSTRAK


Tujuan dari studi ini adalah untuk mengungkap arti dari tindakan Eugenia “Skeeter” Phelan dalam membantu pembantu Afrika Amerika. Ada dua hal yang menjadi permasalahan utama dalam studi ini, yaitu “Bagaimana Karakter Eugenia “Skeeter” Phelan yang digambarkan didalam novel?” dan “apa arti sesungguhnya dari tindakan Eugenia “Skeeter” Phelan dalam membantu pembantu Afrika Amerika untuk mengungkapkan pengalaman mereka bekerja pada keluarga amerika?’.


Kata Kunci: Action, African-American maids, novel, the help
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I realize that this is the beginning of my real life to the next journey. Hopefully, I can be a great person and do many useful things for other people in the future.

Sandra Yulidar Putri Irianndini
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter consists of the background of the study, the objective of the study, the problem formulation, the approach of the study and the method of the study.

A. Background of the Study

Each human is unique. He/she has mind that makes him/her different from other people. The ability of human mind makes him/her able to set goals for him/herself and have aspirations to achieve in life. He has the chance to change his environment to please himself and becomes full individual being. It can be indicated from various kinds of human behaviors and characters in life.

One of the important elements of human behavior is motivation. “Motivation is the concepts we use when describe the forces acting on or within an organism to initiate and direct behavior” Petri (1981: 3). This kind of view is defined by Stipek (1988) in explaining achievement and motivation which underlines the view of initiation, direction, and intensity toward performance. Therefore motivation is the impetus for achieving the objectives.

A person’s behavior can also be portrayed in literary works, such as novels, poems and plays. Kalish (1973: 8) says that literature holds the mirror up to man, therefore, literary work is based on portraying human reality in the real scene of life. The novel that will be discussed in this study is entitled The Help by Kathryn
Stockett. She (born in Jackson, Mississippi, in 1969) is an American writer. She graduated from the University of Alabama with a degree in English and Creative Writing. She moved to New York City and worked in a magazine publishing and marketing for nine years. She wrote this novel based on her experience of being raised by an African American Woman. Why I chose this novel as my study because it has closely related with my environment of life in Papua.

_The help_, Kathryn Stockett’s debut novel, tells the story of black maids working for white families in the early 1960s in Jackson, Mississippi. Eugenia “Skeeter” Phelan is a 23-year-old-graduate from Ole Miss, who returns to her family’s cotton Plantation. When she went back home she found that Constantine, her family’s maid and her best friend for some twenty years, mysteriously disappeared. Nobody tells her why. Sketer’s mother always wants her to find a man and start a family. However, Skeeter’s real dream is to be a writer, but the only job she can find is with the _Jackson Journal_ writing the Miss Myrna column, a column about houseworks and relationships, two things she knows nothing about. So she turns to her friend’s maid Aibileen to get answers and find a lot more.

Aibileen is a black woman who works for a white family, the Leeflofts. Mae Mobley Leeflot is two years old, and Aibileen considers the girl her “Special baby”. Mae Mobley is physically abused and neglected by her mother, Elizabeth. Throughout the novel Aibileen does all she can too boost Mae Mobley’s self-esteem and tries to teach her about civil rights and racial equality, yet none of this distracts her from the recent loss of her own son Treelore, who died in an accident
at work while his white bosses turned away. It should be pointed out that
Aibileen’s English is not good at all because of her low educational background.

Skeeters approaches Aibileen with the idea to write narratives from the
point of view of some black maids. Aibileen reluctantly agrees and brings in her
best friend Minny, a sassy maid who is repeatedly fired for speaking her mind, to
tell her story too. After hearing their stories, Skeeter opens her eyes to the true
prejudices of her upbringing.

The focus of this study is Eugenia “Skeeter” Phelan’s motivation to help
African – American maids reveal their experiences of working for white families.
The topic about motivation is interesting to be discussed because readers may
learn that someone’s motivation can come from any reason. In order to analyze
the topic, the researcher has formulated two problems to be discussed.

B. Objective of the Study

The objective of this study is to reveal the true meaning of Eugenia Phelan’s
action to help African - American maids reveal their experiences of working for
white families as seen in Stockett’s The Help.

C. Problem Formulation

In order to guide the analysis, the researcher has formulated two problems:

1. How is Eugenia “Skeeter” Phelan’s personality described in the novel?
2. What is the meaning of Eugenia “Skeeter” Phelan’s action to help African American maids reveal their experiences of working for white families?

D. Approach of the Study

In conducting this study, the researcher uses psychological approach. In the psychological approach, the theory of character and characterization and also social structure are used to analyze the influence of social structure in Eugenia “Skeeter” Phelan’s personality. The theory of motivation is also used to find out her motivations to help African-American maids reveal their experiences of working for white families.

1. Theory of Critical Approach to Literature

According to Kennedy and Gioia (1999), “Literary criticism is not an abstract, intellectual exercise, it is a natural human response to literature” (p. 1931). To analyze imaginative literature more perceptively, literary critics have borrowed concepts from other disciplines, such as linguistics, psychology, and anthropology.

Kennedy and Gioia (1999) state that there are ten critical approaches to literature. There are Formalist Criticism, Biographical Criticism, Historical Criticism, Psychological Criticism, Mythological Criticism, Sociological Criticism, Gender Criticism, Reader-Response Criticism, Deconstructionist Criticism, and Cultural Studies. From all those ten approaches mentioned by Kennedy and Gioia, the researcher uses the Psychological Criticism to help the
researcher in analyzing Stockett’s *The Help*. This approach focuses on the human psychology. There are three approaches in psychological criticism. First, it investigates the creative process of the artist. The second is the psychological study of a particular artist. In modern literary biographies employ psychological to understand their subject motivations and behavior. The third one is the analysis of fictional character.

Feist and Feist (2009) state that Freud recognized three provinces of the mind which is helps Freud to explain mental images according to their function or purposes. The most primitive part of the mind is *das Es*, or the “It,” which is almost always translated into English as id. The second province is *das Ich*, or the “I,” translated as ego. The third one is *das Uber-Ich*, or the “over-I,” which is translated as superego.

The first is the core of personality and completely unconscious is the psychical region called the *id*. It is a term derived from the impersonal pronoun meaning “the it” or the not-yet-owned component of personality. The *id* has no contact with reality. It strives constantly to reduce tension by satisfying basic desires. In review the *id* is unconscious, chaotic, out of contact with reality, and in service of the pleasure principle. Feist and Feist (2009: 28) have described that:

Besides being pleasure seeking and unrealistic, the *id* is illogical and can simultaneously entertain incompatible ideas: For example, a woman may show conscious love to her mother while unconsciously wishing to destroy her. These opposing desires are possible because the *id* has no morality; that is, it cannot make value judgments or distinguish between good and evil. However the *id* is not immoral, merely amoral. All of the *id*’s energy is spent for one purpose – to seek pleasure without regard for what is proper or just.
The second is the only region of the mind which is in contact with reality called the \textit{ego} or \textit{I}. It is governed by reality principle. As the sole region of the mind in contact with the external world, the ego becomes the decision-making of personality. The ego is the executive of personality, in contact with the real world, and in service of the reality principle. Feist and Feist (2009: 29) have described that:

The ego becomes differentiated from the id when infants learn to distinguish themselves from the outer world while the id remains unchanged the ego continuous to develop strategies for handling the id’s unrealistic and unrelenting demands for pleasure. At times the ego can control the powerful, pleasure-seeking id, but at other times it loses control. The ego has no strength of its own but borrows energy from the id. In spite of this dependence on the id, the ego sometimes comes close to gaining complete control, for instance, during the prime of life of a psychologically mature person.

The third one is superego. According to Feist dan Feist (2009), “The superego, or above-I, represents the moral and ideal aspects of personality and is guided by the moralistic and idealistic principles as opposed to the pleasure principle of the id and the realistic of the ego”. Furthermore they explain that the superego grows out of the ego, and like the ego, it has no energy of its own. The superego has differs from the ego in one important respect. It has no contact with the outside world and therefore is unrealistic in its demands for perfection.

Feist and Feist (2009) state that the superego has two subsystems, the conscience and the ego-ideal. In general, the conscience results from experiences with punishments for improper behaviors and tells us what we should not do, whereas the ego-ideal develops from experiences with rewards for proper behavior and tells us what we should do. Furthermore, they explain that a well-
developed superego acts to control sexual and aggressive impulses through the process of repression. It cannot produce repressions by itself, but it can order the ego to do so. The superego watches closely over the ego, judging its actions and intentions. However, the superego serves the moral and idealistic principles.

In this study, the researcher describes the motivations of Eugenia “Skeeter” Phelan to help African-American maids reveal their experiences of working for white families as seen in Stockett’s *The Help* (2009). Therefore, the researcher uses the theory of Character and Characterization by Gill (1995), the theory of motivation by Huffman, Vernoy and Vernoy (1997) and the theory of Social Structure by Blau (1975) in order to help the researcher to do the analysis of the novel.

2. Theory of Character and Characterization

In order to achieve the first problem formulation of the study, the researcher uses the theory of character and characterization. Those theories help the researcher in analyzing Eugenia “Skeeter” Phelan’s personality. In this case, the researcher would like to clarify those theories.

a. Theory of Character

According to Gill (1995: 27), “A character is a person in a literary work that has some sort of identity. An identity is made up by appearances, conversations, actions, names and (possibly) thoughts going on in the head”. Moreover, he states that there is an important distinction between character and characterization.
A character is a person in a literary work and a characterization is the way in which a character is created. In other words, character created the product and characterization created a method. Characters which are created in books are not real people, but figures who have been specially created by the author. He adds that one of the things which make characters be different from each other is the range and richness of their lives. Some characters are not described in detail and others are very detailed. Forster as cited in Gill (1995: 130) divides character into two categories namely flat character and round character. A flat character has few characteristics, while round one has several.

According to Roberts and Jacobs (1987: 122-124) the authors use four ways to convey information about characters in fiction. There are what the characters themselves say, what the characters do, what other characters say about them and what the authors says about the character. Here the researcher explains those ways to convey information about characters in fiction.

The first way is what the characters themselves say. It deals with the character’s speech. We can know the character of a person in a fiction from their speech. The second way is what the characters do. It deals with the actions as sign of character. The authors show the characters in the books by interpreting actions of the character.

The third way is what other characters say about them. It deals with the opinion or point of view from the other characters. Therefore, the authors give a good or bad impression of character by having a good or bad character say bad or good things about other character. The last way is what the author says about the
character. It deals with what the author says about character. When the authors interpret the actions and characteristic of their characters in the books, they assume the critic’s role, and their opinions may be either wrong or right.

b. Theory of characterization

According to Encarta Webster’s College Dictionary, the word “Characterization” (N) is a description of the character or nature of somebody or something. Barnet, Burto, and Cain (2005: 338) state that “Characterization, or personality, is defined, as in fiction by what the characters do, by what they say, by what others say about them and by the setting in which they move”.

Arp and Johnson (2012: 103) state that “Analyzing characterization is more difficult than describing plot, for human character is infinitely complex, variable and ambiguous”. What a person in a story has done can be summarized by anyone, but to describe convincingly who a person is, a writer needs considerable skills and insight into human beings. They add that fiction offering an exciting opportunity to observe human nature in all complexity and multiplicity which enable to understand the motives and behaviors of people in real life. Furthermore, they explain that there are two ways the author presents their characters in the books, direct presentation and indirect presentation. Direct presentation is that the author tells straight out by exposition or analysis what the characters are like and describes another character in the story. Indirect presentation is that the author shows the character through their actions.

According to Murphy (1972: 161-173), there are nine kinds of characterizations that the author attempts to make his or her characters
understandable. They are personal description, character as seen by another, speech, past life, conversation of others, reactions, direct comments, thoughts, and mannerisms. The first characterization is personal description. It deals with the physical appearance of the character. We can know a person’s personality in a literary work from the dress that the person wears and the facial expression. The second characterization is character seen by another character. The author uses another character to describe a certain person’s character. Therefore, the reader can get a reflected image of the character.

The third characterization is speech. The author gives an insight into the character of one person in the book through what that person says. We can know a person’s personality in a literary work from him or her style of speech, the way he or she talks to other people and the way he or she gives the opinion. The fourth characterization is past life. Murphy (1972: 166) states that, “By letting the reader learn something about a person’s past life, the author gives us clue to events that have helped to shape a person’s characters”. The fifth characterization is conversation of others. The author gives clues to a person’s character in the book through the conversation of other people and the things they say about him or her.

The sixth characterization is reactions. The author gives a clue to a person’s characters by letting the reader to know how the person reacts to various situations and events. The seventh characterization is direct comment. The author describes or comments on a person’s personality directly. The eighth characterization is thoughts. The author gives direct knowledge of what a person is thinking about. The author shows that he or she is able to do what a person cannot do in real life.
The author tells the readers the different thinking of people. The last characterization is mannerism. The author describes a person’s mannerisms, habits or idiosyncrasies which can also help the readers in understanding the characters in the novel.

3. **Theory of Motivation**

Huffman, Vernoy, and Vernoy (1997: 364) state “Motivation refers to factors within an individual (such as needs, desires and interest) that activate, maintain, and direct behavior toward a goal. Furthermore, they explain that there are basically two approaches to the study of motivation: biological theories and psychosocial theories.

A biological theory is the study of motivation which logically begins with a study of instinct theory and followed by drive-reduction theory. Instinct theory is the behavioral patterns that are unlearned, uniform in expression and universal in a species. Instinctual behaviors are obvious in many animals: salmon swim upstream to spawn and birds build nests. McDougall as cited in Huffman, Vernoy, and Vernoy (1997) state that human had numerous “instincts” such as repulsion, curiosity and self-assertiveness. Drive-Reduction theory is the theory that motivation begins with psychological needs. It is a lack or deficiency that elicits a psychological energy or drive directed toward behavior that will satisfy the original need.

A psychosocial theory is the study of motivation which starts by incentive theory, cognitive theory and additional theory from Maslow’s hierarchy of needs.
Incentive theory is the theory that motivation results from environmental stimuli that “pull” the organism in certain directions. Cognitive theory on motivation emphasizes thought process in goal directed behavior. Hierarchy of needs is Maslow’s theory of motivation that basic, physical necessities must be satisfied before higher growth needs can be expressed.

According to Lahey (2009: 360), “The term of motivation refers to internal state that activates and gives direction to our thoughts, feelings and actions”. Furthermore, he says that there are two approaches in motivation. The first is primary motives. Human motives for things those are necessary for survival, such as food, water and warmth. The second is psychological motives is motives related to the individual’s happiness and well-being, but not to survival.

Lahey (2009: 369) states that “Achievement motivation is the psychological need to succeed in school, work, and other areas of life”. Achievement motivation is a complex psychological process because people differ both in their definitions of success and their reasons for being motivated to seek it. People are motivated to achieve by different combinations of desire to learn and master new topics and skills, desire to do better than others and fear of failure.

4. Theory of Social Structure

According to Blau (1975: 220), “Social structure refers to the differentiated interrelated parts in a collectivity”. Furthermore, Blau explains that the concept of social structure starts with simple and concrete definitions of the component parts
and their relations. The parts are groups or classes of people, such as men and women, ethnic group or socioeconomic strata.

Brown (1940) and Strauss (1952) as cited in Blau (1975: 220) state that there are two contrasting conceptions of social structure. First, social structure is a system of social relations among differentiated parts of a society or group. It describes observable empirical conditions and is merely the basis for the theory yet to be constructed to explain these conditions. Second, social structure is a system of logical conceptual framework to reflect empirical conditions but as a theoretical interpretation of social life.

According to Parsons (1968: 3) a social structure seeks to explain the action consequences of a particular set of institutional arrangements. Furthermore, he explains that the human personality system thus becomes one of the main intervening variables in any estimate of the effect of one aspect of social structure. He also adds that it is important to measure the particular qualities of personality which characterize the “population” of any given social structure.

E. Method of the Study

The data were gained from taking notes and analyzing the novel from the reliable data. The researcher took some steps in order to accomplish the study. The first step chose the novel as the primary source of the study. The researcher chose Kathryn Stockett’s The Help as the primary source of the study. In order to understand the novel deeply, the researcher read the novel for several times.
During the reading process, the researcher could observe the portrait of African-American maids’ life in the novel.

Eugenia “Skeeter” Phelan as the one of the three main characters in the novel is the daughter of a white family whose cotton farm employs many African-American in the fields, as well as in household. It made the researcher more focused on the Eugenia “Skeeter” Phelan’s life and personality relied on the novel. The researcher is attached in analyzing the personality of Eugenia “Skeeter” Phelan and her motivation to help African-American maids reveal their experiences of working for white family.

In the second step, the researcher collected some books and references to support the analysis. Since the subject matters of the study are related to character and characterization and also motivation, the researcher collected data about theory of character and characterization, theory about human motivation, and theory of social structure.

In the third step, the researcher emphasized Eugenia “Skeeter” Phelan’s personality which are portrayed in the novel. The researcher discussed them based on the theory of character and characterization. This theory is applied in order to gather the accurate views of the personality of Eugenia “Skeeter” Phelan as the first problem formulation in this study. This result of the analysis plays important role answering how Eugenia “Skeeter” Phelan’s personalities is revealed in the novel.
In the following analysis, the researcher focused on the theory of motivation in order to analyze Eugenia “Skeeter” motivation to help African-American maids reveal their experiences of working for white families. Based on the knowledge of the secondary data, the researcher discussed the second research question. Theory of motivation was the base of the analysis in Eugenia “Skeeter” Phelan’s motivation in the novel.
CHAPTER II

DISCUSSION

This chapter is aimed to answer the problems stated in the first chapter. This chapter is divided into two parts. The first part discusses “How is Eugenia “Skeeter” Phelan’s personality described in the novel?” and the second part discusses “What is the meaning of Eugenia “Skeeter” Phelan’s action to help African-American maids reveal their experiences of working for white families”. The analysis focuses on the personalities of Eugenia “Skeeter” Phelan. In doing so, the researcher uses the theory of character and characterization by Murphy (1972: 161-173). This theory consists of some ways to identify the characterization. By applying the theory, hopefully, the researcher is able to find the personality of Eugenia “Skeeter” Phelan in detail.

The second problem deals with the character’s psychological aspect. The researcher uses theory of motivation by Huffman, Vernoy and Vernoy (1997) to analyze the aspects behind Eugenia “Skeeter” Phelan’s action.

1. The personalities of Eugenia “Skeeter” Phelan

Using Murphy’s (1972) personal description theory in the first chapter, Eugenia “Skeeter” Phelan is a 23-year-old white woman with a college degree major in English and journalism. She used to work in Chi Omega as an editor for
three years. She belongs to the Junior League and is in tight with other high-
society ladies and she lives with her parents and older brother in a cotton
plantation and raised by a black maid named Constantine. Eugenia says, “I turn
up the lane that leads to longleaf, my family’s cotton plantation” (pp. 63-64).

Physically, Eugenia “Skeeter” Phelan has problems with her appearance and
her name “Skeeter”. She describes it herself in following quotation, “I was not a
cute baby. When I was born, my older brother, Carlton, looked at me and declared
to the hospital room. “It’s not a baby, it’s a Skeeter!” and from there the name
stuck. I was long and leggy and mosquito-thin, a record-breaking twenty five
inches at Baptist Hospital. The name grew even more accurate with my pointy,
break-like nose when I was a child” (pp. 66-67).

2.1.1 Shy about her appearance

Using Murphy’s theory of “seen by another character” and “conversation of
other” Eugenia “Skeeter” Phelan is identified as a shy woman. She is not
confident and shy about her look. Even her mother completely has difficulties to
explain about her appearance. “My own mother is looking at me as if I completely
baffle her mind with my looks, my height, my hair” (p. 65).

Eugenia “Skeeter” Phelan viewed through as seen by another character
typeory from Murphy (1972), Aibileen, the black maid of her friend shows
Eugenia “Skeeter” Phelan’s appearance is tall, skinny, blonde hair and old
fashioned. “Miss Skeeter real tall and skinny. Her hair be yellow and cut short
above her shoulder cause she get the frizz year around. She twenty-three or so,
same as Miss Leflot and the rest of them. She set her pocket book on the chair, kind a itch around in her clothes a second. She wearing a white lace blouse buttoned up like a nun, flat shoes so I reckon she don’t look any taller” (p. 4-5).

Aibileen also reveals that Eugenia “Skeeter” Phelan is shy by saying that she has a high cheekbone and blue eyes which make her shy about her look. “She got real high cheekbones. Blue eyes that turn down, giving her a shy way about her” (p. 11).

2.1.2 Kind

Eugenia “Skeeter” Phelan, in her action, always shows kind attitude. From Murphy’s “conversation of others, “mannerism”, and “speech”, it can be inferred that Eugenia is a kind person. Her family has a cotton plantation and employees black maids to work in cotton plantation and also in the house. She is raised by a black maid named Constantine. Constantine always helps her and gives her support when she was ever called ugly by her brother’s friend. It can be seen from Constantine and Eugenia conversation. “Why you crying, girl?” Constantine asked me in the kitchen. I told her what the boy had call me, tears streaming down my face. “Well? Is you?” I blinked, paused my crying. “Is I what?”. “Now you look a here, Eugenia” – because Constantine was the only one who’d occasionally follow mama’s rule. “Ugly live up on the side. Ugly be a hurtful, mean person. Is you one a them peoples?” (p. 73).

From the moment, Eugenia “Skeeter” Phelan realized that she actually has a choice in what she could believe. She treated other maids in a good manner the
same like what Constantine did to her. It can be seen from Aibileen’s statement: “A few times this week, I thought about maybe putting Miss Skeeter on my list. I’m not really sure why. She always nice when she come over” (p. 11).

Eugenia also shows her kindness by stopping Aibileen to call her ma’am. It can be seen in the following conversation between Eugenia and Aibileen. “Anything … you’d like to add… about that?” “No ma’am.” “Aibileen, you don’t have to call me ‘ma’am.’ Not here.” “Yes ma’am. Oh. Sorry” She covers her mouth.

Another kindness of Eugenia also can be seen from her action to help Yule May. Yule May is Eugenia friend’s maid who arrested and sent to the jail because she stole a ring. She is going to sell the ring to pay for her son’s education. “The sound of the ice cream churning outside sounds like bones crunching. I go to the kitchen to wait for Pascagoula, to get answer. I’ll tell daddy. I’ll see if there’s anything he can do, if he knows any lawyer who would be willing to help her” (p. 294).

2.1.3 Brave

From Murphy’s “conversation of others”, “speech”, and “reaction”, it can be inferred that Eugenia “Skeeter” Phelan is brave. She belongs to the Junior League with other high-society ladies but then her become more and more distanced from this safe social status and goes. She devotes herself, at considerable risk, to a book featuring the real stories of the black women who work for the white families in Jackson, Mississippi. Her bravery well informed, as revealed by
Aibileen below “I look around. We out here in the wide open. Don’t she know how dangerous this could be, talking about this while the whole world can see us? “Exactly what kind a stories you think you gonna hear?” (p.119).

Eugenia’s bravery can also be seen when she has conversation with Elaine Stein, she is the literary agent who publishes about Eugenia’s plan to write the point of view of the help. “What gave you this idea? about interviewing domestic housekeepers. I’m curious.” … “I was …well, I was raised by a colored woman. I’ve seen how simple it can be and – and how complex it can be between the families and the help”… “Continue” … “I tried to picture Constantine’s face, Aibileen’s. “They raise a white child and then twenty years later the child becomes the employer. Its irony, that we love them and they love us, yet … “We don’t even allow them to use the toilet in the house”… “So you want to show a side that’s never been examined before, Miss Stein said. “Yes. Because no one ever talks about it. No one talks about anything down here” (p. 123).

By her words answering Miss Stein’s questions, Eugenia shows her bravery in telling the truth about the fact that is happening at that time. Miss Stein also asks her to make sure about what she is going to do is really risky in Mississippi. “Miss Phelan,” Eleine Stein said, and I knew it wasn’t a question, “this negro actually agreed to talk to you candidly? about working for a white family? because that seems like a hell of a risk in a place like Jackson, Mississippi” (p.124)

Eugenia knows that her action is really dangerous and she almost does not have idea about how dangerous things were, but she is still going to do that. “The
interview would be conducted secretly. Since as you know, things are a little dangerous down here right now. “The truth was I had very little idea how dangerous things were” (p. 124).

Another bravery that Eugenia shows in the novel is in the conversation with Minny. The conversation is about to make Minny understands why she wants to write a book about maids who work for white families. My face is burning red. I speak slowly. “We want to show your perspective… so people might understand what it’s like from your side. We-we hope it might change some things around here” (p. 192).

2.1.4 Curious

Eugenia “Skeeter” Phelan’s in her action always looks for the truth. She comes to one of the black maids called Aibileen and asks questions about how it feels be a maid. It can be seen in the conversation between Eugenia and Aibileen. “Did you… ever have dreams of being something else?” “No”, She says. “No ma’am, I didn’t. It’s so quiet, I can hear both of us breathing. “Alright then … what does it feel like, to raise a white child when your own child’s at home, being …” I swallow, embarrassed by the question “… looked after by someone else?” (p. 169).

In asking some questions to Aibileen, Eugenia is not only asking about the bad things about being a maid. She is also asking what Aibileen likes more about being a maid. “Oh, alright” I stare at my questions. “What do you like best about being a maid and what do you like least?” (p. 169).
Eugenia is not only looking for the truth from the maids who work in white families but she also wants to shows maid’s husband’s perspective. She wants to know what maid’s husband thinks about the condition at that time, segregation, and civil right. “Minny, do you and Leroy ever talk about civil rights?” Miss Skeeter asks. “When he comes home from work?” … “Nope” was all Minny said. Minny do not like people up in her business. “Really? He doesn’t share the way he feels about the marches and the segregation? Maybe at work, his bo—“…”Aibileen, don’t you think it would be interesting if we could show a little of the husband’s perspective? Minny, maybe--- “(p. 215).

Another Eugenia’s personality of curious can be seen when Eugenia keeps asking about what happens to Constantine. Aibileen describes this situation as the following quotation. “… She asks me what happen with her old maid Constantine and her mama, and I go cold. I thought if I told her a little, a few weeks ago, about Constantine having daughter, she’d leave me alone about it after that. But Miss Skeeter just keeps on asking me questions. I could tell she don’t understand why colored woman can’t raise no white-skin baby in Mississippi. Be a hard, lonely wife, not belonging here nor there” (p. 113).

2. The meaning of Eugenia “Skeeter” Phelan’s action to help African-American maids speak out of their experiences working for white families

As stated in chapter 1, there are some drives or reasons or motives which cause people to conduct an action. Maslow (1971:38-42) says that people conduct
an action to fulfill their needs. He develops a five-level hierarchy of needs that each need level must be generally satisfied before the person attempts to fill those needs on the next level. Therefore, this analysis is also based on Maslow’s hierarchy of needs theory.

Before the researcher comes to the analysis, the researcher needs to review about Eugenia “Skeeter” Phelan and the maids who work for white families. Eugenia “Skeeter” Phelan is a 23 year old graduated from Ole Miss, who returns to her family’s cotton plantation. She was raised by Constantine, her family’s maid. “I was …well, I was raised by a colored woman” (p. 123). Constantine loves her as her own daughter. She always supports her, protects her, and gives her attention. “Constantine’s the only woman I’ve ever had to look up to, to look her straight in the eye” (p. 76).

Eugenia feels disappointed and angry when she knows that her mother fired Constantine. It can be seen from the conversation between Eugenia and her mother about Constantine. “You … fired her? For what?” “It doesn’t matter. It’s behind me now and I just won’t think about it another minute.” “Mother, she raised me. You tell me right now what happened!” (p. 95).

Eugenie does not understand why her mother can do such a bad thing like that to someone who has helped her for twenty-nine years. “I’m shaking. I’m so mad. I pound my way up the stairs. I sit at my typewriter, stunned that my mother could cast off someone who’d done her the biggest favor of her life, raise her children, teach me kindness and self-respect” (p. 95).
Aibileen is a black maid who works for white family, the Leeflots. She raises the Leeflots’ daughter, Mae Mobley. She has a son who died in an accident at work while his white bosses turned away. Eugenia approaches Aibileen with the idea to write narratives from the point of view some black maids. “I want to interview you. About what it’s like to work as a maid” (p. 119). Aibileen agrees and brings in her best friend Minny, a sassy maid who is repeatedly fired for speaking her mind, to tell her story too. Next is the analysis of the Eugenia “Skeeter” Phelan’s action to help African-American maids reveal their experiences of working for white families.

Eugenie is a kind person. She is having sympathy to Aibileen and Minny and also other maids who have problems with their white families. She finds out that segregation, violence, and discrimination still taking place in the US in 1960s. Eugenia finds some cases related to this slavery era. She finds that maids are not allowed to use the toilet in the house. “We don’t even allow them to use the toilet in the house” (p. 123). The idea of building an outside toilet comes from Hilly Holbrook, one of Eugenia’s friends. She has planned to build an outside toilet because they think that maids carry different kinds of diseases. “All this house they’re building without maid’s quarters? It’s just plain dangerous. Everybody knows they carry different kinds of diseases than we do. I double” (p. 10).

Eugenia disagrees about the plan to build an outside toilet. She makes an argument with Hilly about making an outside toilet. “Miss Skeeter, she frowning at Miss Hilly. She set her cards down face up and say real matter-a-fact, “Maybe we ought to just build you a bathroom outside, Hilly” (p. 10).
Eugenia also finds another segregation, violation, and discrimination that happen in human rights era in her town. She listens to the story of Aibileen who had a son named Treelore who likes writing and wants to write about his white boss. “He read this book call *Invisible Man*. When he done, he say he gone write done what it was like to be colored working for a white man in Mississippi” (p. 99). Aibileen lost her son because he was slipped off the loading dock, fell down on the drive. The tractor trailer did not see him and crushed his lungs.
CHAPTER III

CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND IMPLICATIONS

This chapter consists of three sub-chapters: the conclusions, the recommendations, and the implications. The conclusions are the summary of the findings of the study. The recommendations are the researcher’s recommendations for the future researchers. The implications are the reflection on the meaning and the implications of the study for educational purpose.

A. Conclusions

After the researcher analyzed the meaning of Eugenia “Skeeter” Phelan’s action in *The Help* in chapter II, the researcher has revealed the answers of the two formulated problems. Those are “How is Eugenia “Skeeter” Phelan’s personality described in the novel?” and “What is the meaning of Eugenia “Skeeter” Phelan’s action to help African-American maids reveal their experiences of working for white families?” The answers to those formulated problems are the conclusions of this study.

The personality of Eugenia “Skeeter” Phelan is shy, kind, brave, and curious. She is brave to write a book about the perspectives of black maids working for white families when slavery is still exist. She knows about the risk that she is going to faced but she still take the risk. She is shy about her appearance because her appearance is not likes other woman in her place. She is
tall, skinny, blonde, and an old fashioned but she always shows her kind attitude to everyone and also to black maids. She is curious about everything related to black maids. She interviews some other maids about their experiences and perspective working for white families.

The true meaning of Eugenia “Skeeter” Phelan action’s to help African-American maids reveal their experiences of working for white families is based on her experiences being raised by a black maid named Constantine. Constantine and Eugenia “Skeeter” Phelan have strong relationship as daughter and mother. Besides, she is inspired by Aibileen’s son Treloore, who wants to write a book about black maids’ perspective working for white families.

B. Recommendations

There are two recommendations from the researcher for the future researchers and for English teachers.

1. For Future Researchers

Kathryn Stockett’s The Help is rich of surprises to be found for its meaning. The researcher recommends to the future researchers to examine the motivation of Treloore in dreaming of writing a book about working for white families.

2. For English Teachers

The Help is one of the examples of good novels. It contains human right, culture, life values, literature and writing, race, gender, justice and judgment, and education. It creates critical thinking of students to the next level of combining the
senses onto a novel by reading the novel and analyzing these values. This novel can be used as the materials to teach prose because you can find a true English dialogue, culture, setting of place, social, political, and economical condition of English people in this literary work.

C. Implications

In education, the purpose of life can be related to the reason why there must be teachers. Teachers have their role to be completed one and another through teaching. Teachers are not only meant to teach, get paid, and survive; but they also should give meaning about what they teach. Telling the students good attitudes, good characters, and good manners are going to bring them in a successful life.
REFERENCES


APPENDICES

Summary of *The Help*

*The help*, Kathryn Stockett’s debut novel, tells the story of black maids working for white families in the early 1960s in Jackson, Mississippi. Eugenia “Skeeter” Phelan is a 23-year-old-graduate from Ole Miss, who returns to her family’s cotton Plantation. When she comes back home she finds that Constantine, her family’s maid and her best friend for some twenty years, mysteriously disappears. Nobody tells her why. Sketer’s mother always wants her to find a man and start a family. However, Skeeter’s real dream is to be a writer, but the only job she can find is with the *Jackson Journal* writing the Miss Myrna column, a column about housework. So, she turns to her friend’s maid Aibileen to get answers and find a lot more.

Aibileen is a black woman who works for a white family, the Leeflofts. Mae Mobley Leeflot is two years old, and Aibileen considers the girl her “Special
“baby”. Mae Mobley is physically abused and neglected by her mother, Elizabeth. Throughout the novel Aibileen does all she can too boost Mae Mobley’s self-esteem and tries to teach her about civil rights and racial equality, yet none of this distracts her from the recent loss of her own son Treelore, who died in an accident at work while his white bosses turned away.

Skeeters approaches Aibileen with the idea to write narratives from the point of view of some black maids. Aibileen reluctantly agrees and brings in her best friend Minny, a sassy maid who is repeatedly fired for speaking her mind, to tell her story too. After hearing their stories it changes Skeeter as her eyes open to the true prejudices of her upbringing.

Adapted from:

Kathryn Stockett’s Biography

Kathryn Stockett was born in 1969 in Jackson, Mississippi. She is a writer and editor earned her undergraduate degree in English and creative writing from the University of Alabama. She headed to New York with plans to work in publishing. She spent nine years there, working both in magazine publishing and in marketing before moving to Atlanta, Georgia where she lives with her husband and daughter. Since moving back to the south, Stockett has been focusing on writing for herself, having shifted her attention to fiction. Her debut novel, *The Help* was published by Amy Einhorn Books in 2009, and proved to be one of the hit books of the summer season.

*The Help* garnered instant attention due to its unusual and rarely addressed subject matter, the relationships between white families and domestic servants who were primarily black. Stockett was familiar with the dynamic, but nervous about addressing it in a novel. She understands that it was a controversial subject and could result criticism from both reviewers and from general readers. In an
interview with a writer for book reporter website, Stockett explained her attitude as a child: Growing up in Mississippi, almost every family I knew had a black woman working in their house – cooking, cleaning, and taking care of the white children. That was life in Mississippi. I was young and assumed that’s how most America lived. “Only after she moved north did Stockett realize that she had grown up in a microcosm, and that her memories of her childhood were not of a universal experience. She found herself reminiscing with other southerners she met in New York, trading stories about growing up with black domestic help. Gradually, those memories began to speak an idea and she decided to write a story about relationship with her family’s maid when she was child.

Early on the writing process, Stockett chose to frame her narrative from the point of view of a black maid. It seemed logical, and she had no qualms about her choice because at the time she did not believe anyone else would never read the story. Only when she reached the stage of getting friends to look at her work did she start to get nervous about how she had portrayed the characters and whether their voices rang true. Stockett told the interviewer for the book report website: “I’ll never know what it really felt like to be in the shoes of those black women who worked in the white homes of the south during the 1960s and I hope that no one thinks I presume to know that”.

Adapted from:

Reflection

*The Help* novel is one of the best novels that I ever read. Even though the setting is different from the place I live but this novel reminds me about my childhood in Papua. I live in Papua which all the citizens are from different places in Indonesia. People from Java, Kalimantan, Sumatra, Sulawesi, Flores, Bali, and any other places are living in Papua. Even though we are from different places in Indonesia but we can live together in peace and harmony. We love each other, we help each other, and we respect each other.

*The Help* tells the story about a white American young woman in 1960s, called Eugenie who is being raised by African American maids named Constantine. When she grows up, she helps other maids to reveal their experiences of working for white family. In this story, I put myself as Eugenia because I had the same experiences being raised by a helper named Nella. Her appearance looked the same like African American maid but she was not. She was Papuan. She was living with my family for couple of years. She was kind, patient, and really diligent. I spent my time with her. Once, I saw Nella came home without wearing flip-flop, I was asking her where her flip-flop was and she said that her flip-flop was broken. I felt sad about that then asked my mom bought a new pair of flip-flop for Nella. I felt so happy because I could do something that could make Nella also happy.
What I have learned more from the novel was about the gender and human right. *The Help* is a woman book because is about fighting for your own personal freedom; about having the courage to stand up for yourself and for your convictions, and being strong enough to do whatever it takes to find our own happiness in life. I have to treat every people with respect whatever their gender and job is. No matter what the color of their skin is, their social status, their race or their past life, job is a job and it has something to do with gender or human right. The world is starting to open up and prejudices of all natures are beginning to be challenged. It is clear that change is coming for everyone even woman, regardless of the color of their skin. Every woman in the world deserves a better job and the same right for their life.