
PERSONALITY STRUCTURE OF THE MAIN CHARACTERS IN KATHRYN STOCKETT'S HISTORICAL FICTION "THE HELP"

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ABSTRACT

This article aims to analyze the personality structures of the three main characters in the novel "The Help" by Kathryn Stockett namely Aibileen Clark, Minny Jackson, and Eugenia "Skeeter" using Carl Rogers' humanistic personality theory which include three concepts; self, organism, and phenomenal field, which together form the foundation of individual personality development and self-perception.

The research adopts a descriptive-qualitative method with a literary psychology approach, examining the psychological aspects of each character as portrayed in the novel. Data were collected through close reading and interpretation of the characters' thoughts, behaviors, and experiences, then categorized based on Rogers' theoretical concepts to reveal patterns of personality structure and development.

The findings show that all three characters display unique and complex personality structures, shaped by their personal experiences, social roles, and internal conflicts. The study concludes that Carl Rogers' theory is highly effective for uncovering the psychological depth of literary characters and understanding how they grow through internal and external challenges.

Keywords: *Carl Rogers, Literary Psychoanalysis, , Personality Structure.*

Introduction

Literary works, especially novels, contain an event or incident listed by the author and brought to life through characters that have different characteristics and play an important role in the story. Through these characters, the author describes events or events that occur in human life. Differences in character greatly affect the occurrence of interesting events in literary works. Authors always present characters that have characters so that literary works also describe psychology. With this, literary works are always involved in all aspects of life and living, including psychological aspects (Pradnyana et al, 2019).

According to Kartono (in Romadhon, 2015: 3), psychology is a science related to the human psyche. In this context, the environment has an important role in creating a person's psyche. This is due to the fact that the environment moves a person to behave in accordance with the habits that exist in the surrounding environment. So that it is not only related to psychology, psychology also discusses human behavior. This is in line with the thoughts of Atkinson (1996: 7), that psychology is the science of human psychology and behavior. Human psychology and behavior are often depicted in literary works.

Literary works are considered a psychological phenomenon that presents psychological aspects through each character (Sari, 2011). Ahmadi (2015:1) also said that literary works represent humans who take various actions in fulfilling their desires. Therefore, it can be said that literary works created by a person are a form of release of the desires that a person has. Literary works associated with psychology are important for research, because according to Wellek and Warren (1993: 108) psychology helps in gathering the researcher's sensitivity to reality, sharpening skills, observations and providing opportunities to study patterns that have not been touched before. As psychological symptoms, psychology in literature contains phenomena that are seen through the behavior of the characters. Without the presence of literary psychology with various psychological references, it is likely that the understanding of

literature will be lame (Prawira, 2018). At least the other side of literature will be understood proportionally with literary psychology research (Endraswara, 2008: 7).

One of the theories in psychology that examines human personality is the theory proposed by Carl Rogers. The theory places experience as a benchmark in a person's personal development. Carl Rogers developed a humanistic theory based on his experience as a psychotherapy practitioner (Feist et al, 2017: 304). Since Rogers first observed how personality changes and develops, there are three constructs that form an important basis in his theory. Namely self, organism, and phenomenal fields (Harahap, 2020).

In accordance with the discussion that has been described, researchers are encouraged to examine more deeply the character in the psychological approach developed by Carl Rogers. The researcher will use literary works, namely novels as the material object of this research. The novel that will be studied by researchers is a historical fiction novel entitled "The Help" by Kathryn Stockett, published in 2009. This novel is quite popular and has been adapted into a movie in 2011 and won the 1st place New York Times bestselling novel and the basis for the Academy Award. The setting of this novel is set in Jackson, Mississippi, in the early 1960s, and raises issues of racism and segregation that plagued the United States at that time. The novel depicts the lives of three women who struggle against racial injustice, namely Aibileen Clark, Minny Jackson, and Eugenia Skeeter Phelan. Their struggle to face injustice and find their own voices certainly affects their character development and psychological dynamics. Thus, this study was conducted.

Method

Type of research

This research uses a qualitative descriptive approach with a literary psychology approach. Bogdan and Taylor in Moleong (2010) propose that qualitative research is a research procedure that produces descriptive data in the form of written or spoken words

from people and behaviors that can be observed. This research uses library research as a research method. Library studies are often also defined as library research. Zed (2014: 3) reveals that library study is a series of activities related to the method of collecting library data, reading, recording research materials, and processing research materials that have been found. This form of data can mostly be found in libraries such as related research results, reference books, articles, or journals that are in accordance with the data needed. So that in this study the data to be analyzed is only based on films and does not need to do field research.

Source of data

The source of data in research according to Samsu (2017: 93) is an object, thing, or other person that is used as a place for researchers to observe, ask, or read about data in the form of places, papers, and people. This research uses material objects in the form of a historical fiction novel entitled "The Help" by Kathryn Stockett published by Penguin Books in 2009 with 524 pages. The data taken only focuses on the three main characters, namely Aibileen Clark, Minny Jackson, and Eugenia Skeeter Phelan.

Theoretical framework

According to Rogers (in Harahap, 2020), how to change and attention to the process of personality change is much more important than the characteristics of the personality itself. Rogers has specific views on personality, which are also the basis for applying assumptions to the counseling process. Since Rogers first observed how personality changes and develops, there are three constructs that form an important basis in his theory, namely the self, phenomenal field, and organism.

1. Self

According to Carl Rogers, the Self is an aspect of phenomenological experience. Phenomenological experience is one aspect of human experience in the world, that is, our conscious experience is the experience of ourselves or describing. According to Rogers, individuals perceive the experience of external objects and attribute meaning to them. Self as a construct that shows how each individual sees himself. Furthermore,

personality as a self-concept (self-concept) Rogers defines the perception of characteristics with other people or various aspects of life including belief values, reality, behavior or mental images of oneself, thus the self-concept becomes the main reference in shaping human character, because it is dominant in life achievement. Self-concept can be achieved through social interaction either in the internal family environment or in the academic world, even in class or in various social activities. Social interaction has a major influence on shaping self-concept, because the social environment has a variety of experiences and becomes stories or stories that are inherent in every human being (Setiyani, 2017).

Each individual sees and behaves like seeing themselves according to the conditions at hand. Rogers (2012: 36) reveals that experience is the highest authority, namely the experience that individuals have can be considered as a benchmark of truth that is more appropriate than personal opinions or the opinions of others. By continuing to refer to the experience that is owned, it will find a more appropriate truth as in the case of the process of becoming oneself.

2. Organism

Rogers explained that in human personality there is an organism, which is a physical and psychological unity that has various functions. The function of the organism is as a place to obtain various events experienced and become a source of experiences both consciously and unconsciously and form a phenomenal field (Setiyani, 2017). Organism is the whole totality of the individual which includes thoughts, behavior, and physical state. Organisms have one basic tendency and drive, namely to actualize, maintain and develop themselves.

3. Phenomenal Field

The Phenomenal Field is the entirety of experience. The phenomenal field has a conscious or unconscious nature, depending on whether the experience underlying the phenomenal field is symbolized or not.

Data collection technique

To be able to answer the problem formulation, the right data collection technique is needed. Data collection techniques are one of the important parts that need to be done in a study. According to Gulo (2002: 76) data collection is carried out with the intention of obtaining information that suits the needs so as to achieve research objectives. In this study, the data collection techniques that will be carried out by researchers are as follows:

1. Reading attentively to the novel "The Help" by Kathryn Stockett as a whole.
2. Conducting literature search activities by readings such as research journals that have relevance to Carl Rogers' psychoanalytic theory, especially the concept of personality structure which includes self, phenomenal field, and organism.
3. Recording data in the form of narratives, dialogues, and descriptions of the main characters and linking them with theories that are in accordance with the formulation of research problems.
4. Analyzing and interpreting data by giving codes for each research data, then the collected data is classified into 3 groups (self, organism, and phenomenal field).
5. Refining the results of the analysis into a discussion to answer the formulation of research problems.

Data analysis technique

According to Bogdan (in Sugiyono, 2015: 334), data analysis is a process of searching and compiling systematically based on data obtained such as the results of findings, field notes and results from interviews that can be understood and then informed to others. With data analysis techniques, researchers can analyze well and systematically so as to reduce errors in analyzing data. This research uses descriptive analysis method as a data analysis technique. The data analysis techniques used to obtain the results of this study are as follows:

1. Identifying the suitability of the data with the content of the novel that has been collected.
2. Analyzing and describing the data in accordance with the theory used.

3. Make a conclusion based on the data that has been analyzed, and then attach the research results to the article research report.

Findings

Based on the analysis that has been carried out, several data related to Carl Rogers' personality structure on the main characters of the novel "The Help" were found. The data will be described in the following explanations.

1. Self

a. Aibileen Clark

"Taking care a white babies, that's what I do, along with all the cooking and the cleaning. I done raised seventeen kids in my lifetime. I know how to get them babies to sleep, stop crying, and go in the toilet bowl before they mamas even get out a bed in the morning."

The quote shows how Aibileen views herself (self-image) as someone who is competent and experienced in caring for children. Aibileen describes her life experiences clearly and concretely. She mentions that she has raised seventeen children during her lifetime, suggesting that this experience forms an important part of her identity. As such, the quote reflects the way in which Aibileen understands and expresses herself, focusing on her consistent and significant life experiences. This is in line with the Rogerian approach to the Self, where deep life experiences and an authentic sense of self are central in the formation of an individual's personality.

b. Minny Jackson

"People probably assume I don't care if he finds out—oh I know what people think. They think big strong Minny, she sure can stand up for herself. But they don't know what a pathetic mess I turn into when Leroy's beating on me. I'm afraid to hit back. I'm afraid he'll leave me if I do. I know it makes no sense and I get so mad at myself for being so weak! How can I love a man who beats me raw?"

In the quote, Minny demonstrates a deep understanding of herself, including her feelings of fear, weakness, and her love for her husband despite his violence. Minny

describes her internal conflicts, concerns about how others see her and her view of herself as someone who should be strong in the eyes of others but feels weak within herself. All of this relates to the concept of "self" in Rogers' theory, which encompasses how individuals perceive and value themselves in the context of their life experiences.

c. Eugenia Skeeter Phelan

"I was just smart enough to realize she meant white people. And even though I still felt miserable, and knew that I was, most likely, ugly, it was the first time she ever talked to me like I was something besides my mother's white child. All my life I'd been told what to believe about politics, coloreds, being a girl. But with Constantine's thumb pressed in my hand, I realized I actually had a choice in what I could believe."

In the quote, Skeeter experiences an important moment in the formation of her self-concept. The quote shows a change in self-concept. Skeeter begins to see herself not just from the perspective of others, but as an individual who has a choice in what she believes. This shows the development in her self-concept, from a view that is limited and controlled by others, to being more independent and autonomous. By realizing that she has a choice in what she believes, she begins to move towards self-actualization. According to Rogers, healthy individuals are those who feel free to pursue their own choices and reach their full potential. Skeeter begins to realize that she has control over his own beliefs and choices, which is an important step towards self-actualization.

2. Organism

a. Aibileen Clark

"I stand around the kitchen a minute but I ain't got nothing left to do in there. I need to be in the dining room so I can finish my silver straightening. And I still got the napkin cabinet to sort through today but it's in the hall, right outside where they setting. I don't want a stay late just cause Miss Leefolt playing cards."

In the excerpt, Aibileen describes her perceptions and feelings about the situation at hand, namely about the tasks to be completed in the kitchen, dining room, and napkin

closet, as well as her desire not to be late home because her employer, Miss Leefolt, was playing cards. This quote illustrates how Aibileen subjectively perceives the tasks and situations she faces, which is central to the concept of the phenomenal field in Carl Rogers' theory.

b. Minny Jackson

“So I back up and teach her the simplest things because I want her to learn and learn it fast. See, I need her to explain to her husband why a hundred-and- sixty-five-pound Negro woman has keys to his house. I need him to know why I have his sterling silver and Miss Celia’s zillion-karat ruby earrings in my hand every day. I need him to know this before he walks in one fine day and calls the police. Or saves a dime and takes care of business himself.”

This dialog excerpt from Minny Jackson's character in the novel "The Help" reflects aspects of the phenomenal field according to Carl Rogers' theory. The phenomenal field refers to the subjective world that individual's experience, including the perceptions and meanings they give to their experiences. In this excerpt, Minny demonstrates a deep awareness and understanding of the situation and perceptions of others, specifically how Celia's husband might react if he found Minny in his house. Minny considers the need to explain and justify her presence and access to valuables to avoid potential conflict or misunderstanding.

“Miss Celia and I make a list of what to cook that week, and the next morning I do the grocery shopping. But it takes me twice as long because I have to drive all the way to the white Jitney Jungle in town instead of the colored Piggly Wiggly by me since I figure she won’t eat food from a colored grocery store and I reckon I don’t blame her, with the potatoes having inch-long eyes and the milk almost sour. When I get to work, I’m ready to fight with her over all the reasons I’m late, but there Miss Celia is on the bed like before, smiling like it doesn’t matter. All dressed up and going nowhere. For five hours she sits there, reading the magazines. The only time I see her get up is for a glass of milk or to pee. But I don’t ask. I’m just the maid.”

In the quote above, Minny Jackson describes her personal experiences and perceptions of the situation she faced while working for Miss Celia. She reflects the social and economic perceptions of the differences between a grocery store for whites and a grocery store for blacks, as well as how she felt and thought when faced with this situation. This shows how Minny perceives the surrounding world and responds to existing conditions, which is the essence of the phenomenal field in Carl Rogers' theory. This quote emphasizes more on Minny's subjective experience and how she responds to it internally, rather than other aspects such as "self" which refers more to the self-concept or "organism" which includes the whole biological and psychological system of the individual.

c. Eugeia Skeeter Phelan

"I sat paralyzed a second. She offered no chatting or hello, no introduction of herself. I realized it was best to answer her as instructed. "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."

The quote describes Skeeter's personal feelings and experiences when interacting with others, especially regarding her background and views on the relationship between white families and black servants. The behavior in the quote fits better into the phenomenal field. In the excerpt, Skeeter describes her experience of being raised by a woman of color and her observations of the complex relationship between white families and their maids. This reflects her personal views and her interpretation of those experiences, all of which fall under the phenomenal field. As such, the quote reflects how Skeeter views and understands the world based on her personal experiences.

3. Phenomenal Field

a. Aibileen Clark

"Part of me wishes I could have a new start too. But I'm not young. My life's about done."

The organism in this context refers to the direct experience of the individual, including the thoughts, feelings, and experiences that arise from the individual's actual circumstances. Aibileen's statement *"Part of me wishes I could have a new start too. But I'm not young. My life's about done."* Indicates an awareness of the desire to start over, but is accompanied by the realization that she's not young anymore and that her life is about done. This is a direct reflection of Aibileen's experience and perception of her current life, which corresponds to the concept of organism in Rogers' personality theory.

b. Minny Jackson

"The more I look, the more I start to understand what's going on here, what Minny's done. I don't know why I'm just now getting this. Minny made us put the pie story in to protect us. Not to protect herself, but to protect me and the other maids. She knew it would only make it worse for herself with Hilly. But she did it anyway, for everybody else. She don't want anybody to see how scared she is."

Minny in the quote shows the trait of organism because she acts on her fundamental internal drive, which is to protect and fight for the interests of her fellow maids, even though she realizes that her actions could worsen her situation with Hilly. Minny's actions show that she prioritizes the needs and safety of others (organism) over her own interests and fears.

c. Eugenia Skeeter Phelan

"Wasn't that the point of the book? For women to realize, we are just two people. Not that much separates us. Not nearly as much as I'd thought."

Skeeter realizes that her identity as a white woman in Mississippi does not match her more inclusive and humanist values and beliefs. Through her interactions with the maids, Skeeter experiences dissonance between her daily life experiences and her values. Writing a book about the maids' experiences was Skeeter's step towards self-actualization, where she sought to bridge the social and racial divide she witnessed.

Discussion

Based on the analysis of personality structure with Carl Rogers' theory of the novel "The Help" by Kathryn Stockett, this study obtained results in the form of a description of the self, organism, and phenomenal field owned or experienced by the three main characters. The personality structure of the three main characters according to Carl Rogers' theory can be concluded as follows: Aibileen Clark sees herself as a competent and experienced caregiver, with a focus on completing work without delay, and realizes the desire to start a new life but is realistic about her age and life circumstances. Minny Jackson feels an inner conflict between her strong self-image in the eyes of others and her own feelings of weakness, is very aware of the perceptions of others and the situation she is in to avoid problems, and acts to protect the interests of others even if it puts herself at risk, showing altruism and courage. Eugenia "Skeeter" Phelan progressed from being influenced by the views of others to becoming a more autonomous and independent individual, with an evolving view of the relationship between white families and black maids, as well as being aware of inclusive and humanist values, writing a book about the experiences of maids as a step towards self-actualization.

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