

Clashing Concepts of Freedom in Kathryn Stockett's *The Help*

Carolin M. Tampi Dra. A. Clara Mamentu, M. Hum, Dr. Nihta Liando, M.A., Ph.D.

Carolin M. Tampi

NIM 11 301 858

English Language and Literature Department

Faculty of Language and Art

Manado State University

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research is to reveal the clashing concepts of freedom in Stockett's *The Help* and to find out the causes and effects of clashing concepts. The writer uses a qualitative research which means the data are taken from words or sentences. The sources of data is categorized into, primary and secondary sources. The primary sources is the novel itself, and the secondary sources are books, journal, and internet browsing that supported the topic. In analyzing the data the writer uses objective approach which analyzed the novel only the body of the novel without considering the external element because this novel is categorized as the popular novel. The result of this study reveals the clashing concepts of freedom appears through the story and produces an causes and effect like discrimination that cause black people being treated improperly separated and limited in using public facilities. This research can be one of the scientific sources for those who are interested in doing a research on same novel and can help them in making a better research.

1. INTRODUCTION

Human are creatures to be one with each other it means human can't live by itself. Human life in this world will not always stable because every person will face many clashing or conflicts in their life. Clashing is interactions between groups and individuals. Clashing occurs in the process of social interaction because people have their own values, skill, personalities and opinions, people rarely agree on all aspect on their relationship. In living life human have a variety of needs and interest. In order to fulfill those needs and interests of the occasional clashing or conflict happening between individuals with one another. According to Maru, a society conserves a certain pattern or structure to govern the interaction among them (Maru, 2014).

Based on English oxford Dictionary, "Clashing [...] is in conflict with each other; incompatible". According to Kenney the conflict with which fiction concerns within a single man, a conflict between man and society, between man and nature (Kenney 1966:18). Conflict can occur in the smallest environments or an individual to a large extent. Which we get it at a time, from each and every experience we encounter. Conflict is a part of human life either in the real life or in fiction. That is why conflict is very interesting to analyze because conflicts make the story happens.

The Help is an interesting novel. It tells about the relationships between African-American maids and their white employers in Jakson Mississipi. The Help is interesting, which in this story there is an impression about the real-life that happen to each other. For the example, looking down people status, making rules with somebody freedom.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Many people are familiar with the classics of seventeenth and eighteenth centuries but let's take a look at the other forms of literature that were made available to the wealthy and well educated, there were many form of writing available to those did not have money for classics of the time. The rise of popular press and literacy meant that writing reached a wider audience then ever before. Writing now was available to upper class women and to the middle-class in the form of chapbooks, and ballads. The term groups street was used for many of the writers of the popular press. The new demand for writers mean that not all of them were talented writers, most of them were very poorly paid and lived in poor

conditions. Groups street was a place of filth, clutter and noise, and home to thieves and beggars. It was also the place where printing presses based themselves along with aspiring writers.

The Help as a Literary Work

Literature is the reflection and expression of human life in the world of truth and beauty. Literature can be described as something written through the process of imagination which is an imitation or a reflection from real life. Taylor in *Understanding the elements of Literature* states :

“Literature means writing value as work of art. It also refers to the composition that tells stories, dramatizes, situations, expresses emotions, analyses and advocates. “Literature, like other arts, is essentially an imaginative act of the writer’s Imagination in selecting, ordering, and interpreting life experiences” (Richard Taylor, 1981:1)

From the above definition, the writer come to a conclusion that literary experienced in our life both physically or enforcing them to express it in a form of literary works.

“There are three forms of literary works: novel, drama, poem, and short story. But in this opportunity the writer is appealed and impelled to do a research on a novel. Novel is describe term. Fiction is misleading for although fiction does often include made up imaginary elements. It has potential for being true to the nature of reality, true to experience (Griffith 1982:14).

Novel is one of literary work which gives pleasure to the reader. Novel can take the readers to a certain situation, place or periods that occur in the story of novel. Through the series of events and conflicts experienced by the characters, the readers seem to enter the character’s life in the novel. At the end of the novel, the readers can discover meaning, messages or values which are revealed in the novel. According to Maru, literary requires an author’s precision in choosing the words to succesfully convey an idea (Maru:2008).

3. METHODOLOGY

Research Design

In doing this research, the writer uses qualitative research. It stated in the quotation below :

“Qualitative research has the natural setting as direct source data and the researcher is key instrument in addition. Mechanically recorder materials are viewed in their entirety by the researcher with the researcher being the key instrument for analysis”. (Bogdan and Biklen 1982:28)

It is the most suitable method in analyzing novel by sharing the data in form of words. It differs from quantitative research in which the data are shared in the form of number. This research be presented in descriptive research.

Data Collection

In collecting the data, the writer used two kind of sources, they are primary source and secondary sources. *The Help* novel by Stockett's is primary sources of this research. The secondary sources are the books, internet browsing and the other information from other sources that support the writer's research.

Data Analysis

In analyzing the data, the writer used objective approach.

“Objective orientation, which on principle regards the work of art in isolation from all these external point of references analyzes it as a self-sufficient entity constituted by its parts in their internal relations, and sets out to judge it solely by criteria intrinsic to its own mode of being”. (Abrams 1979:26)

Based on the quotation above, objective approach focuses only on literary work itself without looking at the external aspects and emphasizes the interrelationships of the elements by the internal elements. In sense the writer only pay attention part of the part in this novel to get information about the clashing concepts of freedom during racism and segregation.

4. DISCUSSION

The definition of clashing according to English Oxford Dictionary, “Clashing [...] is in conflict with each other; incompatible”. Amighi stated that “Clashing is interacting with the opposite extreme movement qualities, such as one person using high intensity bound flow while the other uses low intensity free flow”. (Amighi 1999:218)

The concept of freedom was born since there was a thought about human existence in this world, where the existence of human in this world not decided by higher powers. Human has it role in creating its existence in life. The everyday actualization will make them realize about their ability in life and world and their environment, too. (Syukur 1998:15)

Based on the experts definitions clashing is interactions between groups and individuals. Clashing occurs in the process of social interaction because people have their own values, skill, personalities and opinions, people rarely agree on all aspect on their relationship. In living life human have a variety of needs and interest. In order to fulfill those needs and interests of the occasional clashing or conflict happen between individuals with one another.

Clashing Concepts of Freedom in Kathryn Stockket’s *The Help*

Stockett presents the blacks or colored society is in the lowest position like, Aibileen, Minny and all the maids in Jakson, Mississipi. The clashing concepts of freedom occur because the whites community assume that blacks people are disease and dirty. It is actually due to the condition that shown in Kathryn Stockett’s *The Help* that almost all the white think that the black are dirty who can spread many kinds of diseases. The diseases are caused by the black color skin. This problem makes the white very worry with the black disease and it becomes a problem for both the white and the black.

Clashing Concepts of Freedom Seen in the Character of Aibileen

Aibileen Clark is a wise black housemaids and take care of white children. She works for Leefolt family and take care of their daughter Mae Mobley Leefolt, even Aibileen knows that relationship could hurt them both. Aibileen was change since her own son died. Aibileen teach the children she raise up that the color of skin doesn’t matter but love and kindness is so important to do, but she often feels that the message is countered

by the racism in Jackson. Aibileen realized that she more offer in life than being a maid and finds the courage to try something new.

Clashing Concepts in Social Status

Stratification is a part of society . Aibileen comes from the minority class background, grow up in race and segregation therefore Aibileen just can work as a house maids. Aibileen as the main characters in the novel, have many bad experiences as black maids. When Aibileen works in Miss Leefolt's house, she has a separate bathroom because her lady worries that she will contaminate diseases.

I finish the silver set on the towels and tell Miss Leefolt I go to go home even though it's half a hour early and she gone short my pay. She open her muoth like she want to protest and I whisper my lie, I vomited, and she say go. Caused besides her own mother, there ain't nothing Miss Leefolt scared of more than Negro deseases. (Stockett, 1999:99)

The quotations above reveals about the diseases of black people. White ladies avoid the risk of the black disease and always forbid their children to near the black maids.

"All this houses they're building without maid's quarters? It's just plain dangerous. Everybody knows they carry different kinds of disease than we do.

"That's exactly why I've designed the Home Help Sanitation Initiative," Miss Hilly say. "As a disease-preventative measure," I'm surprised by how tight my troat get. It's a shame I learned to keep down a long time ago. (Stockett, 1999:9)

This issue are revealed since beginning of the plot. Miss Hilly keeps an attention of the prevention of black diseases. She has a program with the idea of the Home Help Sanitation Initiative. The program of prevention for the white ladies in order to be carefull with their maids in the household aspect. She promotes it when the white ladies have a monthly club. The text below is the sanitation hygiene program is designed by Miss hilly Holbrook and this program will be published in the monthly Megazine of her club.

Hilly Holbrook introduces the Home Help Sanitation Initiative. A disease preventative measure. Low-cost bathroom installation in your garage or shed, for homes without such an important fixture.

Ladies, did you know that:

- *99% of all colored diseases are carried in the urine*
- *White can become permanently disable by nearly all of these diseases because we lack immunities coloreds carry in their darker pigmentation*
- *Some germs carried by whites can also be harmful to coloreds too. Protect yourself. Protect your children. Protect your help. From the Holbrook, we say, You're welcome! (Stockett, 1999:158)*

The dialog below shows about the uses of black maid's bathroom in the lady house, a white little child Mae Mobley uses a maid's bathroom (Aibileen's bathroom) and then Miss Leefolt is very angry; she screams to her daughter and then she drags Mae Mobley into the room immediately. Miss Leefolt hits the daughter's leg, and it makes her child crying. Aibileen just looks at the condition silently, because she can intervene it.

"I did not raise you to use the colored bathroom!" I hear her whispering, thinking I can't hear, and I think, Lady, you didn't raise your child at all. "This is dirty out there, Mae Mobley. You'll catch diseases! No no no!" and I hear her pop her again and again on her bare legs. (Stockett, 1999:95)

I fell that bitter seed growing inside a me, the one planted after Treelore died. I want to yell so loud that Baby Girl can hear me that dirty ain't a color, disease ain't the Negro side a town. I want to stop that moment from coming-and it come in ever white child's life-when they start to think that colored folks ain't as good as whites. (Stockett, 1999:96)

The quotation above reveals about the moment when Aibileen talks a story to Mae Mobley. She inserts the story how the ways of struggle of discrimination and she always tries to explain the children that there is not different between the white and the black people. Because dirty is not caused by the skin color and the black doesn't cause disease. Aibileen tries to give understanding through a white child that all human are the same. So

Aibileen as a maid gets the racial discrimination from the White especially her white ladies. The black as disease people, because black skin is dirty and contaminate diseases.

Causes of Clashing Concepts

There are some causes of clashing concepts in this novel. They are a rules of jim crow laws, and different residential environments.

Rules of Jim Crow Laws

There was a law that make white people and the black people in booklet of Compilation of Jim Crow of the South. The booklet contains a rules that colored people including the black can and can't do, in an assortment of Southern state.

The laws are neither threatening nor friendly, just citing the facts:

No person shall required any white female to nurse in wards or rooms

In which negro men are placed.

It shall be unlawful for a white person to marry anyone except a white

Person. Any marriage in violation of this section shall be void.

No colored barber shall serve as a barber to white women or girls.

The officer in charge shall not bury any colored person upon ground used for the burial of white persons.

Books shall not be interchangeable between the white and colored schools, but shall continue to be used by the race first using them.

I read through four of the twenty-five pages, mesmerized by how many laws exist to separate us. Negro and white are not allowed to share water fountains, movie houses, public restroom, ballparks, phone booths, circus shows.

Negroes cannot use the same pharmacy or buy postage stamps at the same window as me.

Lunch counters, the state fair, pool tables, hospitals.

Number forty seven I have to read twice, for its irony.

(Stockett, 1999:173)

The quotation above reveal that the black people get injustice from the government, because the black people are minority. The black people become the second class citizens who get second facilities after the white people. The black people just accept the rules from

the government defenselessly. Both of the black people and the white people know these false laws, and even though live in the same region, but they don't talk about the laws.

Different Residential Environments

The White and the black people has a separate area. They can't live together. White people has a big area than black people.

*Miss Leefolt and all her white friends live, in a neighborhood
call Belhaven. Right next to
Belhaven be the downtown and the state capital.
Down the road from Belhaven is white Woodland Hills,
then Sherwood forest,
which is miles a big live oaks with the most hanging down.
Nobody living in it yet, but it's there for when the white folks
is ready to move somewhere else new.
So Jakson's just one white neighborhood after the next
and more springing up down the road.
But the colored part a town, we one big anthill, surrounded
by state land that ain't for sale. As our numbers get bigger,
we can't spread out.
Our part a town just gets ticker. (Stockett, 1999:12)*

Aibileen and Minny stay in the same area, far away from their white ladie's houses. The black cannot enter the white area, if they do not work. Although the population of the black increase every year, they cannot move elsewhere. On the other hand, when white enter or pass the black area, they feel uncomfortable, because their actions are watched carefully by the black.

*But there, narrow eyes watch me pass by. When my car gets
close to him,
the little colored boys turns and scats behind a houses
a few down from Aibileen's. (Stockett, 1999:104)*

The quotation above reveals that the white and the black are segregation in the areas in which they live, though the legalization is approved by government but mechanisms to prevent discrimination are in place.

Effects of Clashing Concepts

There are some effects of clashing concepts that occur in this novel. They are limitations of rights, minimum education, change of attitude, and secret joy.

Limitations of Rights

Minimum Education

The black people get minimum educational services. The black and white people school are separate too. They study in a different school. The black people only can enter schools and the white people don't allowed the black people in the same school.

"Separate but equal," Miss Hilly say back to Miss Leefolt.

*"Tha's what Governer Ross Barnett says is right,
and you can't argue with the government."*

*Miss Leefolt clap her hand on her thigh like she got
the most interesting thing to change the subject to.*

I'm with her. Let's discuss something else.

"Did I tell you what Raleigh said the other day?"

*But Miss Hilly shaking her head. "Aibileen, you wouldn't
want to go to a school full of white people, would you?"*

(stockett, 1999:185)

But then I think: Why? Why I have to Stand here and agree with her?

And if Mae Mobley gone hear it, she gone hear some sense.

I get my breath.

My heart beating hard. And I say polite as I can,

"Not a school full a just people.

But where the colored and the white folks is together."

*"But Aibileen" –Miss Hilly smile real cold- "colored people
and white people are just so...different." she wrinkle up her nose.*

I feel my lip curling. A course different! Everybody know colored people

And white people ain't the same. But we still just people! Shoot,

I even been hearing Jesus had colored skin living out there in the desert.

I press My lips together. (socket, 1999:186)

The dialogue above reveals about the conversation of Miss Hilly and Aibileen about the school. Miss Hilly says that the school for the black people and the white people must be separated, because they are different. But the other way Aibileen hopes the black people and the white people can study together in the same school.

The black people and white people has a separate libraries. The black library not only has incomplete collections of books, but also it has a less of facilities. The black people can't enter to the white people library and the black people can't borrow books from the white libraries.

Aibileen give me a dry cough. "You know colored folks ain't allowed in that library."

I sit there a second, feeling stupid. "I can't believe I forgot that."

The colored library must be pretty bad. There was a sit-in at the white library a few years ago and it made the papers.

When the colored crowd showed up for the sit-in trial, the police department simply stepped back

and turned the German shepherds loose. I look at Aibileen and am reminded, once again the risk she's taking talking to me,

"I'll be glad to pick the books up for you," I say. (Stockett, 1999:154)

The quotation above reveals about the segregation of the library, Which the black people can't enter and borrow books from the white people Library. Like Aibileen, she was a smart woman and she needs some books from the white library, but because she was black she can't.

The black people can't enter to the white people hospital and the other way. The white people or the black people doctors didn't want to help the other skin patients.

I never seen that much red come out a person and I grab the boy,

I grab them four fingers. Toted him to the colored hospital cause I didn't know where the white one was.

But when I got there, a colored man

stop me and say, is this boy white?"

"And I say, Yessuh, and he say, Is them his white fingers?"

And I say, Yessuh, and he say, Well, you better tell em he

*your high yellow cause that colored docter won't operate
on a white boy in a Negro hospital.
And then a white policeman grab me and he say,
Now you look a here-*" (Stockett, 1999:151)

The quotation above reveals about the attitude of doctors in hospital. When Aibileen works in another white lady house, a little white boy get an accident, he cuts his finger in a fan, therefore she helps him. Aibileen takes him to the black hospital, but the black doctors reject him because he was a white boy.

Black people were not allowed to go in the voting station. This has become a serious proble, black people is considered brave struggle to come voting station defiantly.

*"And my cousin Shinelle in Cauter County? They burn up her cars cause
She went down to the voting station."* (Stockett 1999:103)

The quotation above about Minny's cousin goes to the vote station, and the white get so very angry to her. For example the white burn Minny's cousin car to show that they white people have a big power then black people. The white treat and against the black people not fairly.

Change of Mindset

The issues like race and segregation of African American done by the white people in many aspects of public services that show the clashing concepts. Aibileen and Minny as the black people or as a maids who worked at white people houses accept the rules, and the laws but then, they try against to racial discrimination to get a better life, get a peace and get a complete freedom.

She's quit a second and then she blurts it out.

"What if-what if you don't like what I got to say?

I mean, about white peoples."

"I-I... this isn't my opinion," I say.

"It doesn't matter how I feel."

"But how I know you ain't gone mad, turn on me?"

"I don't... I guess you'll just have to... trust me,"

"Law have mercy. I reckon I'm on do it.

"Miss Skeeter, we gone have to be careful." (Stockett, 1999:121)

*I go quiet, thinking of Hilly's bathroom plan and accusing the maid
Of stealing and her talk of diseases. The name comes out flat, bitter as a
bad pecan. (Stockett, 1999:122)*

The conversation above reveal that Aibileen is agreeing to Skeeter to do the book project. Perhaps the only way she has to safely challenge the racism of the south and to tell her story. Deeply angered by Hilly's bullying make Aibileen decides to throw a lot with Skeeter.

*"I told her, let the regular old history books tell it. White people been
Representing colored opinions since the beginning a time.*

"That's right. You tell her"

"I did. I tell her she crazy" Aibileen says,

"I ask her, what if we told the truth?"

How we too scared to ask for minimum wage.

How nobody gets paid they Social Security.

How it feel when your own boss be calling you..."

Aibileen shakes her head. I'm glad she doesn't say it.

"Even if she changing all the names a the help and the white ladies,"

"She crazy if she think we do something dangerous as that. For her"

"We don't want a bring all that mess up"

"Tell people the truth." (Stockett, 1999:128)

*I've been trying to tell white women the truth about working for them
since I was fourteen years old. (Stockett, 1999:129)*

The conversation above shows that Aibileen starts to organized the other maids to contribute in to the book project. At the beginning with her friends Minny. Minny is excited about the idea , but she has also deeply afraid to put herself and her family in danger by speaking out. Given the power that white people wield over black people, increasing frequency of violence against outspoken of black people.

*Said it was cause she'd made sure everbody knew I was a thief. I've never
stole a thing in my life but she told everbody I did and wasn't nobody in
town gone hire a sass-mouthing thieving Nigra for a maid and I might as
well go head and work for free.*

“And that’s how come I did it.” (Stockett, 1999:338)

“I tell her to eat my shit.”

“Then I go home. I mix up that chocolate custard pie.

“I tote it over to Miss Walter house, where I know Miss Hilly be setting round,

waiting for the home to come and get her mama, so she can sell that house. (Stockett, 1999:339)

The dialogue above shows the reason’s why Minny continuing hatred and makes against to Miss Hilly. Because Hilly spreads lie about Minny’s thievery so that no one else will hire her. A maid’s reputation is everything, and Hilly has ruined Minny’s credentials.

Secret Joy

Despite the heat and hard work at the Leefolt family as a housemaid Aibileen carries a secret joy. Finally the book about the maids has been published.

The cover is a pale blue, color a the sky. And a big white bird-a peace dove-spreads its wings from end to end. The title Help is written across the front in black letters, in bold fashion. It say by Anonymous.

(Stockett,1999: 393)

The quotation above reveal that Skeeter, Aibileen and Minny have reached the final portion of the writer’s struggle that the book has been published, and their efforts were not in vain. But still, the unexpected success of the book raises the danger that some people may recognize the people in it, which could bring the maids in trouble.

“Mister Dennis talking like a auction man, laughing, eyebrows going up and down, pointing at our book, “...and it is truly touching. Enlightening, I’d say, and they used the made-up town of Niceville, Mississipi, but who knows?” He halfway cover his mouth, whisper real loud, “It could be Jackson!” (Stockett, 1999:399)

“Huh?” Miss Leefolt ask Mister Dennis. And then poof-we on to a Tide commercial. “What were they talking about?” Miss Leefolt ask me. I don’t answer. My heart’s pounding.

“My friend Joline had a book in her hand.”

“Yes, ma’am.”

“What was it called? Help or something like that?”

“Did I hear them say it was about Jackson?” she say. A second later, the Tide commercial over and there’s Dennis James again holding up the book and Miss Joline’s still all red in the face. “That’s all for today,” he say, “but y’all be sure and pick up your copy of little Big Man and Help from our sponsor, and see for yourself, is it or is it not about Jackson?”

Miss Leefolt look at me and say, “See that? I told you they said it was about Jackson!” (Stockett, 401)

The dialogue above shows that the televised book review demonstrated how easily rumors can be started. The reviewer suggest that the book could be about anywhere, even Jackson. Miss leefolt interprets this to mean that the book is definitely about Jackson.

“One-arm Ernestine call and say Miss Hilly’s talking all over town about who’s in the book. She telling white ladies to fire they maids and she ain’t even guessing the right ones!” “She told Miss Sinclair to fire Annabelle. So Miss Sinclair fire her. (Stockett, 412)

The quotation above reveal, that the book about the maid has impacted racial relationships in the number of ways. In some cases, the book has the dreaded effect of exarcerbating racism, one white woman fires her maid under Miss Hilly’s orders.

“Miss Hilly told Miss Lou Anne, “Your Louvenia’s in here. I know she is and you need to fire her. You ought send that Nigra to jail.” (Stockett, 412)

“Skeeter, Louvenia is the bravest person I know. Even with all her own troubles, she sits down and talked to me. She helps me trough my days.”

“If you did write it, if Hilly’s rumor is true, I just want you to know, I will never fire Louvenia. (Stockett, 418)

But in another cases the book results in a more equitable relationship between black people and white people. One white women starts to treat her maid better because she

doesn't want her secrets to get out. Another woman sits down with her maid and has a come true conversation.

But at the same time feeling, in a way, that I am free, like Minny. Freer than Miss Leefolt, who so looked up in her own head she don't even recognized herself when she read it. And freer than Miss Hilly. That woman gone spend the rest a her life trying to convince people she didn't eat the pie. (Stockett, 444)

The paper gone pay me ten dolar a week, and there's the book money plus a little more coming,

In thirty minutes, my whole life's...done. Maybe I ought to keep writing, not just for the paper, but something else, about all the people I know and the things I seen and done. (Stockett, 444)

The moment of this story ends with hope. Both of Aibileen and Minny have been empowered through the book-writing experience. Aibileen realizes that she has a talent for writing and could make her own path in life rather than work for someone else.

5. CONCLUSION

After analyzing K. Stockett *The Help*, the writer concludes that clashing concepts of freedom has impact in many aspects social, such as in a society, political, education, culture, and religious aspects.

This novel is about the African American society in 1960's. Which black people is considered as lower class that has no power. The black people get the racial and segregation from the white people because they are regarded as disease and dirty. They get the clashing concepts in many aspects of life such as in justice, different residential environments and limitations of rights.

The attempts of the black people has done in some ways. One of the black people done by Aibileen. She's write the experiences about the racial discrimination of black people specific the black maid who work with white family. After they collect the stories,

they publish it and creates good impact to black people because they see it as their bravery to voice the feelings and thought to get human right in America society.

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