

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of the Problem

Literature is a form of written or spoken expression that conveys feelings and human experiences. According to Wellek & Warren (1956), some literary critics view literature as a creative product that reflects various aspects of life. It is a vast and endless subject, offering numerous insights into life. A literary work often mirrors the author's life, serving as a medium for expressing their imagination, ideas, and psychological experiences. There are many literary works including books, poetry, poems, drama and novels. However, the one that will be used by the researcher in this research is novel. According to Nurgiyantoro (1998), A novel is a work of fiction that offers a world, a world that contains an idealized model of life, or an imaginative world, which is built through various intrinsic elements that are also imaginative.

In this research, the researcher chose “Heart of Darkness” by Joseph Conrad as the data source. The novel "Heart of Darkness" was first published as a three-part serial, in February, March, and April 1899, in Blackwood's Magazine. The novel explores how the pursuit of esteem needs can influence human behavior and actions. The story is narrated by Charles Marlow, a seaman and adventurer, who recounts his journey into the heart of the African continent. Marlow takes a job as a riverboat captain with a Belgian trading company.

He travels up to the Congo River to collect ivory that would later be taken to Europe. In the story, Marlow hears a lot about Kurtz before meeting him. Kurtz was considered one of the most successful and respected agents in the region because of his success in collecting ivory more than other agents. Marlow then heard that Kurtz was seriously ill and needed to be fetched and returned to Europe immediately. When Marlow arrived at the Inner Station, he met Kurtz and talked to him. As time went by, Marlow realized that Kurtz had lost his mental balance due to the long influence of being among the local people who worshipped him as a God. Kurtz had to be carried onto the ship in a very weak state and even tried to escape because he didn't want to go home. Marlow chased after Kurtz and found him trying to attend a worship ritual organized by the local people for him. The protagonist of the novel, Marlow, experiences similar events to the author.

The author of the novel, Joseph Conrad, originally named Józef Teodor Konrad Korzeniowski, was born in Ukraine on December 3, 1857, and died on August 3, 1924, Conrad died at his house, Oswald's, in Bishops Bourne, Kent, England. Conrad married an English woman, Jessie Georg and the couple had two sons. He's celebrated as one of the greatest English-language writers, despite only learning English in adulthood, and speaking it with a noticeable Polish accent. Before turning to writing, Conrad had a long career at sea, working first in the French and then in the British merchant marine. He spent roughly half of his 19 years in maritime service sailing. Conrad's literary works, which often have maritime settings, explore the human spirit facing the challenges and mysteries of an indifferent universe. He was known for his exceptional skill in writing and for

introducing a kind of tragic perspective to English literature, distinct from traditional English styles. The novel “Heart of Darkness” is an inspiration from his travel journal, written eight years after returning from Africa. At 32, Joseph Conrad received an appointment from a Belgian trading company to serve on one of its steamers. During a journey up the Congo River from one station to another, the captain fell ill, and Conrad took over command. He navigated the ship up the Tributary Lualaba River to the trading company's furthest station, Kindu, in the Eastern Congo Free State.

To achieve a deeper comprehension of the novel, it can be analyzed through various approaches, including a psychological approach to analyze the psychological aspect of the novel. Psychology, coming from ancient Greek roots "psyche" means “mind” and "logos” means “knowledge” offers perspectives on human thoughts, feelings, and actions (Coon & Mitterer, 2010). A psychological approach can provide valuable insights into literary work, uncovering underlying meanings through analysis of themes and symbols (Guerin, Labor, Morgan, Reeseman, & Willingham, 2005).

One of the remarkable theories of psychology is a hierarchy of needs. Human beings are inherently designed to survive. As part of this design, humans have essential needs that must be met for their continued existence. These needs, referred to as necessities, are unavoidable aspects of human life. According to Maslow (2017), these needs are like a ladder, starting with psychological needs like food, water, and shelter, which are necessary for survival. Safety needs encompass the desire for stability and security in one’s environment. Love and

belongingness needs relate to the need for relationships and social connections. Esteem needs involve the desire for a sense of accomplishment, respect, and recognition. Lastly, self-actualization needs pertain to the fulfillment of one's potential and the pursuit of personal growth and meaning. Maslow (2017) believed that people work to fulfill these needs in a specific order.

Among these needs, the need for esteem and self-worth plays a significant role in human behavior. Maslow (1954) distinguished between two aspects of esteem needs, which are self-esteem and respect from others. First, self-esteem encompasses desires for achievement, strength, competence, mastery, confidence in the face of the world, independence, and freedom. On the other hand, the second, respect for others' needs includes desires for fame and glory, recognition, status, appreciation, prestige, dominance, attention, importance, dignity, and reputation. As a result, when individuals are unable to satisfy these first and second needs, their sense of self-esteem is likely to be impacted. The researcher aimed to explore the hierarchy of needs, with a specific focus on esteem needs, through the lens of the narrators in Joseph Conrad's "Heart of Darkness," employing Abraham Maslow's psychological approach.

It can be seen through the characters in the novel, that Kurtz serves as a prime example of how the pursuit of esteem needs can lead individuals to dark and destructive paths. Initially, Kurtz is portrayed as a highly idealized figure, admired for his intelligence, charisma, and eloquence. However, as he becomes more deeply entrenched in the pursuit of power and recognition in the Congo, he descends into a state of moral and psychological darkness. Kurtz's pursuit of esteem needs drives

him to commit horrific acts of violence and exploitation against the native Africans, all in the name of furthering his influence and authority. His obsession with his image and legacy blinds him to the suffering he causes and the moral decay he undergoes. As Marlow discovers, Kurtz's final words "The horror! The horror!" can be interpreted as a realization of the darkness within himself that he has embraced in his pursuit of esteem needs. The following is a conversation between Marlow and Kurtz at that time which is quoted from the novel and shows Kurtz's unfulfilled esteem needs:

"I was on the threshold of great things," he pleaded, in a voice of longing, with a wistfulness of tone that made my blood run cold. "And now for this stupid scoundrel—" His right hand was raised, and the forefinger held out. **"I tried to preserve my reputation!"** (P. 76. Conrad, 2008).

This quotation illustrates Kurtz's focus on the second aspect of esteem needs, as he is consumed by the desire for recognition and reputation. He is willing to sacrifice his morals and humanity in pursuit of his reputation. Kurtz's lamentation about being on the threshold of great things highlights his desire for recognition. He tried to preserve his reputation emphasizing his strong desire to maintain his image and standing in the eyes of others. This statement reveals Kurtz's preoccupation with how he is perceived by society, indicating a deep need for external validation. His fixation on preserving his reputation suggests that he places a high value on how others view him.

In "Heart of Darkness," Marlow's reflection on work and self-discovery occurs during his narration of his journey up to the Congo River and it shows his esteem needs. Marlow contemplates the nature of work and the motivations behind it, likely during a moment of rest or contemplation while he waits for his ship to be

repaired. The quotation that shows the evidence of Marlow's reflection on self-discovery that indicate his unfulfilled self-esteem need is shown below:

“No, I don't like work. I had rather laze about and think of all the fine things that could be done. I don't like work—no man does—but I like what is in the work— **the chance to find yourself**. Your own reality—for yourself, not for others—what no other man can ever know. They can only see the mere show, and never can tell what it really means.” (P. 34. Conrad, 2008).

In this quotation, Marlow is expressing a common sentiment about work that he doesn't particularly enjoy, as most people don't. However, he finds value in work because it allows him to discover his true self. In the quotation, Marlow believes that through work, he can uncover his reality, which is something that only he can truly understand, and it is a kind of achievement that he needs to gain a mastery of himself. He contrasts this personal discovery with how others perceive him ("the mere show"), suggesting that others can only see the external aspects of his work and not its true meaning to him. It shows Marlow's focus on self-discovery and the importance he places on finding his truth, an example of his self-esteem need, which is achievement.

Another example outside of the novel is Michael Jackson. Jackson's esteem needs were fulfilled through his immense recognition and fame. From a very young age, he achieved unprecedented levels of success with the Jackson 5 and later as a solo artist. His global fame was marked by numerous awards and accolades, including 13 Grammy Awards and records such as being the first artist to have a top ten single in five different decades. Jackson's groundbreaking music videos and performances, such as "Thriller," "Billie Jean," and "Beat It," solidified his status as an icon and innovator in the music industry. This public recognition and

admiration provided a strong sense of external validation, fulfilling his esteem needs on a public and professional level. However, despite these achievements, some aspects of Jackson's esteem needs remained unfulfilled. He often struggled with personal validation and self-esteem, which can be seen in his frequent changes to his appearance and reports of feeling isolated and misunderstood. His personal life was also marred by controversies, including accusations and legal battles, which likely affected his sense of self-worth and personal validation. Furthermore, Jackson's continuous pursuit of external validation through awards and records suggests a deep-seated need for affirmation, indicating that his desire for unconditional acceptance and self-acceptance was never fully met. Jackson's public achievements and recognition fulfilled many aspects of his esteem needs, his personal struggles and need for continuous validation suggest that other aspects remained unfulfilled. This duality highlights the complex nature of esteem needs and how they can be partially met in some areas while remaining unmet in others.

Besides this research that analyzes literary work by applying a psychological approach, several researchers took a psychological approach to analyze the data source for writing their research, Mustaf et al. (2023) The paper analyzes Boochani's memoir "No Friend but the Mountains" using Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs. Written while Boochani was detained on Manus Island, the memoir chronicles his pursuit of self-actualization, revealing that he struggled to fully meet even basic physiological and psychological needs. His story metaphorically represents the ongoing quest for self-actualization despite significant obstacles. This research analyze "Heart of Darkness" by Joseph Conrad

similarly examines how esteem needs impact characters' motivations and actions, using Maslow's theory. In contrast, this research focuses on analyzing the esteem needs and impacts of unfulfilled esteem needs in the major characters of "Heart of Darkness".

The second research from Anggraeni et al. (2021) the researchers conducted a study that explores the character of Will Traynor in the film "Me Before You" through Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, particularly focusing on esteem needs. The research uses descriptive data analysis to assess how Will's traits—such as sensitivity, openness, kindness, and confidence—relate to his need for approval, value, and recognition. The study highlights how Will's personality and interactions, especially with Louisa Clark, reflect broader psychological principles related to esteem needs. This research on "Heart of Darkness" by Joseph Conrad bears similarities to this study in its use of Maslow's theory to explore esteem needs. However, while the researchers concentrate on the individual traits and psychological profile of a single character in a contemporary setting, this research examines multiple characters within a complex colonial context. In contrast, this research focuses on analyzing the esteem needs and impacts of unfulfilled esteem needs in the major characters of "Heart of Darkness".

In this research, the reason the researcher chose the novel "Heart of Darkness" is because the researcher found the relevance between the novel and the theory used in this research. Through the main character, which is Charles Marlow narrative, Joseph Conrad explores themes of power, ambition, and the pursuit of recognition, which are closely related to esteem needs. It provides a rich

background in which to analyze the esteem needs of the characters and gain deeper insights into the impacts of unfulfilled esteem needs through the lens of Maslow's hierarchy of needs, particularly esteem needs. Based on the reasons above, the researcher entitles this research as: **“Esteem Needs of The Major Characters in “Heart of Darkness” Novel by Joseph Conrad: Psychological Approach.”**

1.2. Identification of the Problem

Based on the background, the researcher has identified several key issues:

1. The obstacles of the main character to achieve esteem needs in “Heart of Darkness” novel by Joseph Conrad.
2. The impacts of fulfilled esteem need on the major characters of “Heart of Darkness” novel by Joseph Conrad.
3. The struggles of the major characters to achieve esteem needs in “Heart of Darkness” novel by Joseph Conrad.
4. The esteem needs reflected by the major characters in “Heart of Darkness” novel by Joseph Conrad.
5. The impacts of unfulfilled esteem need on the major characters of “Heart of Darkness” novel by Joseph Conrad.

1.3. Limitation of the Problem

Based on the identification of the problem, the researcher has narrowed down the focus to:

1. The esteem needs reflected by the major characters in “Heart of Darkness” novel by Joseph Conrad.

2. The impacts of unfulfilled esteem need on the major characters of “Heart of Darkness” novel by Joseph Conrad.

1.4. Formulation of the Problem

Based on the limitations of the problem, the researcher has formulated the following:

1. What esteem needs are reflected by the major characters in "Heart of Darkness" novel by Joseph Conrad?
2. What are the impacts of unfulfilled esteem needs on the major characters in "Heart of Darkness" novel by Joseph Conrad?

1.5. Objective of the Problem

Based on the formulation of the problem, the researcher finds the purposes of this research:

1. To identify the esteem needs reflected by the major characters in "Heart of Darkness" novel by Joseph Conrad.
2. To find the impacts of unfulfilled esteem needs on the major characters in "Heart of Darkness" novel by Joseph Conrad.

1.6. Significance of the Research

1. Theoretically

The purpose of the research is to provide an understanding of how esteem needs influence individuals. It provides insights into human behavior and the complexities of esteem in colonial settings. The researcher hopes that this study will enhance readers' understanding and benefit their broader knowledge of the subject.

2. Practically

In practical terms, this research is anticipated to serve as a valuable reference for students, particularly those majoring in English Literature, who are interested in the psychological approach. The researcher hopes that lecturers and teachers can also use this research as material for teaching the theory of esteem needs.

1.7. Definition of Key Terms

Psychological Approach : The psychological approach to literature, often referred to as the intrinsic approach, examines the internal elements that shape literary works. A psychological approach can provide valuable insights into literary work, uncovering underlying meanings through analysis of themes and symbols. Central to this approach is the belief that a literary work forms a unified whole, with its constituent elements interconnected and contributing to its overall meaning.

Hierarchy of Needs : These needs can be likened to a ladder, beginning with physiological needs such as food, water, and shelter, which are essential for survival. Safety needs encompass the desire for security and stability in one's environment. Love and belongingness needs revolve around the need for social connections and

relationships. Esteem needs entail the desire for respect, recognition, and a sense of achievement. Finally, self-actualization needs involve the fulfillment of one's potential and the pursuit of personal growth and meaning.

Esteem Needs

: This need is often met through acts of recognition, appreciation, and respect from others. Self-esteem is shaped by feelings of accomplishment, recognition, pride, and social status. Maslow distinguished between two aspects of esteem: the esteem one receives from others and self-respect. Self-actualization, the final level in the hierarchy, follows the fulfillment of esteem needs.