

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of the Research

Literature is a collection of imaginative works that tell stories about human life. The creator of this work employs language to communicate human messages, ideas, feelings, experiences, and thoughts. This collection of literary works represents the author's activity since it includes characteristics of real-world human behavior. In the book "An Introduction to Literary Studies," Mario Klarer (2023) states that literary works are surely a human desire to leave signs of oneself or the work through creative expressions that connect human life according to historical, cultural, and even social backgrounds, and that will exist and outlive their creators. As a result, every human behavior will always be connected to literary works.

There are many authors' works that connect human life and behavior, such as novels. Novels are literary works that take the form of long narratives that frequently describe aspects of human life. According to Peter Reynolds (2013), novels also portray fictional characters that are frequently made to look like real people in terms of conflict, emotions, thinking, and behavior. Scholes (2006) argues that the author imagines the plots in novels based on his observations of reality, rather than just writing them for readers' pleasure. The author experiences actual societal occurrences, which he then reflects in his writing through the characters he developed (Mursal, 1978, p. 4). As a result, novels can be viewed as a place in which values, standards, worldviews, and real human behavior are expressed through literary writing.

A literary work in the form of a novel that shows the existence of literary writing that involves real human behavior in the characterization of its characters is Tess Wakefield's novel "Purple Hearts." The story takes setting in Austin, Texas, in the United States, and was published on April 25, 2017, by Atria/Emily Bestler Books/Alloy Entertainment. This book was written by Tess Wakefield as her debut novel for mature readers. In the story, Cassandra Lee Salazar, also known as Cassie Salazar, is a singer-songwriter who has been diagnosed with type 1 diabetes and faces financial difficulties. She is forced into a contract marriage with another main character, Luke Joseph Morrow, a soldier who is also struggling financially and has a troubled past, to earn health insurance. Through its characters, the novel additionally explores issues of Love and Belonging, including contract marriage, financial difficulties, and health problems, which sometimes occur in real life.

Tess Wakefield is an American author best known for her debut novel, "Purple Hearts," which was published in 2017. Unfortunately, her personal information, such as her date and place of birth, as well as details about her childhood and educational background, is not publicly available. However, Tess Wakefield revealed in an interview on the JeanBookNerd site on April 26, 2017, that she studied the history of visual culture, including advertising, film, and art, to develop her critical thinking skills as an author. She also works in Golden Valley, Minnesota, as a copywriter, an amateur comedian, and a caretaker for several healthy houseplants. Tess Wakefield's work was debuted as a work of great public attention through "Purple Hearts," a novel that was adapted into a movie by Netflix in 2022,

which was once the number one movie that attracted and touched the hearts of its audience.

Tess Wakefield's "Purple Hearts" focuses on the psychological aspects of the two main characters through their mental health conditions, trauma, contract marriages, and difficult economic conditions. Through the mental conditions of the two characters described in this novel, a reader realizes the existence of psychological issues that are also a reflection of the psyche of some human beings. The psychological issues that arise in this novel can be analyzed using a psychological approach. According to Abraham Maslow (1943), the psychological approach to character development in literature is used to better comprehend each character's motivation and psychological well-being throughout the plot. This approach is used in literature to show how the characters in the story act to resolve conflicts, grow and change, and reach mental and emotional health. The characters' presence in the literary work influences the reader's emotions and psyche through this psychological approach, reflecting the psychological state of human reality.

The psychological approach developed by Abraham Maslow is based on the Theory of Human Motivation, generally known as the Hierarchy of Needs. This theory is one of the psychological theories that is useful as a tool for analyzing behavior and motivation in humans in meeting their needs. Abraham Maslow (1943) underlined that this theory, which is symbolized by a pyramid, focuses on fulfilling human needs in order of the highest need. According to this theory, human needs are classified into five levels: physiological needs, safety needs, love and belonging needs, self-esteem needs, and self-actualization. Each character's development in

literature can be represented by an experience that portrays the fulfillment or unfulfillment of meeting these needs.

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The Love and Belonging Needs, which are the third level in Abraham Maslow's psychological theory, have an important impact on how characters develop psychologically. The primary conflict in Tess Wakefield's novel "Purple Hearts" is intimately tied to the characters' psychological connections, making it a useful tool to investigate the Love and Belonging Needs. The Love and Belonging Need is linked to the need for acceptance, affection, and a sense of social and intimate ownership. The characters in the novel portray complicated psychological problems as a result of rejection, disconnection, and interpersonal separation. Through the characters in the novel "Purple Hearts," it exists to examine more closely how the characters' behavior and psychological changes in response to meeting their needs for Love and Belonging are influenced by these needs.

One of the phenomena of the need for Love and Belonging appears in the Suara.com News on September 20, 2024, entitled “*Belajar dari Kasus Lolly-Nikita Mirzani, Akibat Kurang Kasih Sayang Orangtua?*” It describes Laura Meizani, also known as Lolly, a daughter of Nikita Mirzani, who is too loving toward her partner, Vadel Badjideh. According to child psychologists, she developed an unpleasant attitude as a result of her mother not showing her the affection she should have, thus she looked for other forms of love. This issue leads to the conclusion that people require love, acceptance, care, and a sense of belonging to a certain community in addition to necessities like food, clothing, and a place to live. Maslow (1943) argued that if individuals’ needs for affection and connection are not fulfilled, they will experience difficulties in psychological development, which will have a negative impact on their character and social relationships.

The phenomena of the need for love and belonging was then identified in a study by Al Humairoh & Thoyib (2025), which examined how the social and cultural stigma associated with the profession of women as a mortician in Hong Kong and Indonesia becomes an obstacle to meeting this need. The short stories “A Woman Like Me” by Xi Xi, which takes place in Hong Kong, and “Kisah Cinta Perempuan Perias Mayat” by Agus Noor, which takes place in Indonesia, were investigated in this study. Although their diverse cultural upbringings and historical periods, the protagonists’ struggles to meet their emotional needs are characterized by social isolation and lots of rejection. Individuals’ psychological development will be impacted if they are unable to fulfill these needs. In conclusion, the

satisfaction of the need for love and belonging is intimately linked to stigma in society.

In addition to the previous phenomenon, Tess Wakefield's novel "Purple Hearts" additionally represents a need for love and belonging. The issues that arise in actual life are also present in this literary work. This novel presents a story of a love journey between Cassandra Lee Salazar and Luke Joseph Morrow, who began as a contract marriage to overcome their financial problems without involving feelings of love. Not only is the love journey complicated, but also their family life is not in good relation. The quote below highlights the unfulfilled needs for love and belonging.

"My dad and I don't get along. And Jake's got a wife and a kid. I don't want to burden them" (Tess Wakefield, 2017, p. 8). This quote is part of Luke Joseph Morrow's story. This quote illustrates that Luke's relationship with his father is not good. In Maslow's theory, family is the first environment that should provide the need for love and belonging. If not, individuals will feel lonely and unsupported, or even distrustful of interpersonal relationships. Then, the sentence *"And Jake's got a wife and a kid. I don't want to burden them"* shows that Luke feels he has no place in his family and feels unworthy to depend on his family. It demonstrates Luke's lack of emotional support from his family, resulting in an absence of a desire for affection and feeling included in his family.

In addition to Luke Joseph Morrow, there is another main character, Cassandra Lee Salazar. Both of these characters have experienced trauma in their lives. According to Abraham Maslow's theory, acceptance, love, belonging, needs, and

intimacy are the crucial needs for love and belonging. However, in this story, there are obstacles faced by these two characters in fulfilling these needs. These characters show an impact on their psychological development, such as feelings of loneliness and emotional isolation, high levels of anxiety, and difficulty in establishing healthy relationships in society. The quote above shows how this affects the psychological development of one of the main characters.

“You’re on a tear, huh?” Nora said. “I like it. Jobless Cassie waits for no man” (Tess Wakefield, 2017, p. 12). This novel chapter describes the story of Cassie Lee Salazar. The statement is taken from a conversation between Cassie and her best friend, Nora. It emphasizes Cassie’s independence and ability to rely solely on herself. Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs states that a person may become extremely independent if they do not feel like they belong and are loved. Cassie demonstrates her ability to survive on her own and has low expectations of others, particularly love partners. Cassie’s expression of isolation is her psychological response to the obstacles she faces in life, which include a lack of affection and support. Instead of pursuing connection and relationships, she isolated her emotions and painted the picture of independence and strength to avoid looking weak.

In addition to this research, which examines the struggles and obstacles in fulfilling the needs for love and belonging, the researcher is supported by two previous studies. The first study, “Love and Belonging Needs in John Green’s *The Fault in Our Stars*,” by Dwi Permana et al. (2021), examines the obstacles that Hazel and Augustus have in meeting their needs for love and belonging. This research employs a content analysis method based on Maslow’s theory combined with a

qualitative approach. According to this study, the researchers found that Augustus suffers from sadness and regularly exhibits his independence, and Hazel feels alone and lonely when her love and belonging needs are not met.

The second research by Ruth & Satria (2020) in the title “Love and Belonging Needs of Main Character in Novel “Me Before You” by Jojo Moyes.” This purpose of this study is to explain the need for love and belonging. The researcher used a qualitative descriptive method based on Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs theory on the main characters in the novel, Luisa and William. Furthermore, the researchers discovered the main characters’ obstacles and struggles in fulfilling their need for love and belonging. The results show that human psychological growth is impacted when the need for love and belonging is not met, as was the case with William, who felt empty and alone.

Since there has not been much research done on this topic, the researcher is motivated to find out more. The phenomenon of the two main characters’ need for love and belonging in the “Purple Hearts” novel also inspires the researcher’s interest because it offers an insightful literary understanding of how experiences, backgrounds, and social environments impact the psychology of fictional characters who are also portrayed as human. The main characters also represent the struggles and obstacles encountered in meeting love and belonging needs, which result in psychological responses that are representative of the human condition. The researcher employed Abraham Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs theory to focus on the main character’s need for love and belonging. The researcher drew this research based on the phenomenon in the background that motivated the research with the

title **“Love And Belonging Needs of The Main Characters In Tess Wakefield’s “Purple Hearts” Novel: Psychological Approach”**.

1.2. Identification of the Problem

Based on the research background provided above, researcher discovered various issues that can be recognized, including:

1. The list of unfulfilled love and belonging needs in the novel “Purple Hearts” by Tess Wakefield
2. The inhibiting factors of the unfulfilled love and belonging needs in the novel “Purple Hearts” by Tess Wakefield
3. The psychological impacts of the unfulfilled love and belonging needs in the novel “Purple Hearts” by Tess Wakefield
4. The struggles of the main characters to fulfill love and belonging needs in the novel “Purple Hearts” by Tess Wakefield
5. The obstacles of the main characters to fulfill love and belonging needs in the novel “Purple Hearts” by Tess Wakefield

1.3. Limitation of the Problem

Based on the problem identification above, the researcher limited the issues as follows:

1. The struggles of the main characters to fulfill love and belonging needs in the novel “Purple Hearts” by Tess Wakefield
2. The obstacles of the main characters to fulfill love and belonging needs in the novel “Purple Hearts” by Tess Wakefield

1.4. Formulation of the Problem

Based on the previously discussed issues limit, the researcher formulates the following questions:

1. What are the struggles of the main characters to fulfill love and belonging needs in the novel “Purple Hearts” by Tess Wakefield?
2. What are the obstacles of the main characters to fulfill love and belonging needs in the novel “Purple Hearts” by Tess Wakefield?

1.5. Objective of the Research

The purposes of the research are as follows:

1. To discover the struggles of the main characters to fulfill love and belonging needs in the novel “Purple Hearts” by Tess Wakefield
2. To figure out the obstacles of the main characters to fulfill love and belonging needs in the novel “Purple Hearts” by Tess Wakefield

1.6. Significance of the Research

The researcher is employed to bring the research’s benefit which is separated into theoretical and practical significances.

1. Theoretical Significance

For students who use a psychological approach, the study’s findings offer helpful references, especially in research that uses the Hierarchy of Needs theory. The results of this study are significant because they can facilitate and help understand human needs, especially related to the struggles and obstacles in fulfilling the love and belonging needs.

2. Practical Significance

This study is expected to assist the community at large, especially students of Putera Batam University, in fulfilling their needs for love and belonging in family, friendship, and even intimate relationships. This aims to avoid the negative outcomes of unfulfilled students' needs for affection and acceptance.

1.7. Definition of the Key Terms

- Psychological Approach** : An approach in literature that implies certain attitudes or beliefs about human behavior. This approach is used in literature to show how characters in the story act to resolve conflicts, grow and change, and achieve mental and emotional health that reflects the emotions and souls of the psychological state of human reality.
- Hierarchy of Needs** : A hierarchy of requires consisting of five levels human needs arranged in the form of a pyramid. This psychological theory will drive individual motivation to reach the base level of physiology to the top of self-actualization needs.

Love and Belonging Needs : The third level of basic human needs include not just romantic relationships, but also friendships, familial relationships, and a sense of belonging to an organization or social community that makes individual feel loved and wanted.