



A Literary-Psychological Study of the Character Alie in the Novel *Rumah untuk Alie* by Lenn Liu

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ABSTRACT

This study is motivated by the importance of understanding the psychological state of characters in literary works as representations of human life experiences expressed through literary language. It aims to describe the representation of the character Alie's psychological needs, the ways in which these needs are fulfilled or left unfulfilled, and the use of literary language to depict her psychological state in Lenn Liu's novel *Rumah untuk Alie*, drawing upon Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs theory. The study employs a literary psychology approach, utilizing a qualitative descriptive method and content analysis. The data consist of narrative excerpts, dialogue, internal monologues, diction, and emotional expressions that reveal Alie's psychological state. Data collection was conducted through document study and the "read-and-note" technique. The findings indicate that Alie's psychological state is characterized primarily by unmet needs for safety, love and belonging, and esteem, resulting from rejection, verbal abuse, and a lack of affection within her family environment. These conditions are represented through the author's narration, dialogue between characters, internal monologues, and diction that conveys the character's emotional distress, sadness, fear, and sense of alienation. Despite facing various psychological pressures, Alie demonstrates efforts toward self-preservation and self-actualization through self-acceptance, resilience, and the ability to find meaning in her life experiences.

Keyword: literary-psychological, character Alie, novel, rumah untuk Alie

INTRODUCTION

Literary works are products of human creativity that represent various life experiences, whether individual or social in nature. Through aesthetic language, literature does not merely convey stories but also depicts life's realities, conflicts, human values, and the psychological dynamics experienced by characters. Consequently, literature shares a close bond with human life, as it is capable of reflecting the various issues that arise within society. Characters in literary works are shaped by conflicts, experiences, and inner struggles that mirror real-life situations, making them compelling subjects for study through the lens of literary psychology.

As a form of prose fiction, the novel offers ample scope for portraying character development

and psychological states. Authors can present various forms of internal and external conflict that influence changes in a character's attitude, behavior, and personality. These conflicts are conveyed not only through the plot but also through narration, dialogue, internal monologues, and the choice of diction that shapes the character's emotional experience. Thus, the novel serves as a highly relevant subject for analysis using a literary psychology approach.

According to Armariena et al. (2022), the study of literary psychology is employed to uncover a character's inner conflicts by analyzing the life experiences, emotions, and mental states represented in the text. This approach enables researchers to understand the relationship between

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a character's conflicts and their personality development, allowing the literary work to be understood not merely as a story, but as a representation of human psychological dynamics. According to Hetilaniar et al. (2023), literary psychology analysis can reveal forms of emotion, egoism, and personality dynamics through the behaviors, dialogue, and conflicts constructed by the author. Such analysis demonstrates that linguistic elements within a novel play a crucial role in representing a character's psychological state.

One contemporary Indonesian novel that prominently features psychological issues is *Rumah untuk Alie* by Lenn Liu. This novel chronicles the life of Alie, who endures various forms of rejection, verbal abuse, emotional neglect, and a lack of affection within her family environment. These circumstances give rise to fear, alienation, low self-esteem, and inner conflict, all of which shape her personality development. The psychological struggles experienced by Alie are portrayed through literary language—encompassing narrative, dialogue, internal monologue, and emotional expressions employed by the author. This demonstrates that language in literature serves not merely as a medium of communication but also as a vehicle for revealing a character's psychological state.

The phenomenon addressed in the novel *Rumah untuk Alie* is relevant to current societal conditions. Various studies indicate that disharmonious family relationships, verbal abuse, and a lack of emotional support are factors that can affect an individual's mental health. These issues are increasingly prevalent across various age groups and have become a subject of interest in the fields of education, psychology, and literature. Therefore, examining the psychological state of the character Alie is significant, as it offers insight into the representation of psychological conflict in literature and demonstrates how literary language is employed to construct a character's inner experience.

Based on this background, this study aims to describe the representation of the character Alie's

psychological needs using Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs theory, explain the ways in which these needs are met or left unfulfilled, and analyze the use of literary language to represent the character's psychological state in Lenn Liu's novel *Rumah untuk Alie*.

This research is expected to yield both theoretical and practical benefits. Theoretically, it aims to enrich the study of the psychology of literature, specifically regarding the application of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs theory to the analysis of contemporary Indonesian novels. Practically, the findings are intended to serve as a reference for students, lecturers, and researchers developing literary studies that integrate psychological analysis with the study of literary language. Furthermore, the research is expected to serve as a resource for literary appreciation, particularly in understanding how a character's psychological state is represented through linguistic elements.

The psychology of literature is an approach that utilizes psychological theories to examine the psychological aspects of characters within literary works. According to Endraswara (2018:16), the psychology of literature views literary works as representations of human psychological activity manifested through characters, conflicts, and events within the story. Minderop (2020:53) explains that the literary psychology approach focuses on analyzing a character's motivations, emotions, inner conflicts, and personality development based on textual evidence. This study employs Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs theory, which posits that human behavior is influenced by five levels of needs: physiological needs, safety needs, love and belonging needs, esteem needs, and self-actualization needs. According to Hadori (2015:214), the fulfillment—or lack thereof—of these needs affects an individual's psychological state and behavior. Therefore, Maslow's theory is relevant for exploring the psychological dynamics of the character Alie in the novel *Rumah untuk Alie*.

Extensive research has been conducted on the psychology of literature. Putri, Vardani, and Anggraeni (2023) found that the life experiences



of the character in the novel *Pancarona* influenced the development of her psychological state. Zaidal (2024) revealed that the psychological conflict of the character in the novel *Areksa* was influenced by social pressures and traumatic experiences, analyzed using Freudian theory. Meanwhile, Priyanti and Tustiawati (2025) demonstrated that the psychological state of the character in the *Shadow and Bone* film adaptation was constructed through dialogue, narration, and character expressions. However, none of these three studies examined the representation of the character's psychological needs using Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs theory while focusing on the relationship between the character's psychological state and the use of literary language in the novel *Rumah untuk Alie*. Therefore, this study aims to fill that gap through a literary-psychological analysis that integrates Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs theory with an examination of narration, dialogue, internal monologue, and diction choices as representations of the character Alie's psychological state.

METHOD

This study employs a qualitative approach with a descriptive method. A qualitative approach was selected because the research aims to describe and interpret the psychological state of the character Alie as represented through literary language in the novel *Rumah untuk Alie* by Lenn Liu. The descriptive method is used to systematically reveal phenomena based on data comprising narration, dialogue, internal monologue, and linguistic elements related to the character's psychological state. This approach is deemed appropriate because literary research emphasizes the interpretation of the text rather than quantitative measurement.

The object of this study is the psychological state of the character Alie in the novel *Rumah untuk Alie* by Lenn Liu, analyzed based on Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs theory. The primary data source is the novel *Rumah untuk Alie* by Lenn Liu, published by Tekad (10th printing, 2025). Secondary data sources were obtained from books

on the psychology of literature, Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs theory, scholarly journal articles, and previous research relevant to the study's focus.

The research data consist of linguistic units found within the novel—including narration, dialogue, internal monologue, diction choices, metaphors, and emotional expressions—that represent the psychological state of the character Alie. These data were selected for their ability to illustrate the fulfillment or non-fulfillment of the character's needs based on Maslow's five-level hierarchy: physiological needs, safety needs, love and belongingness needs, esteem needs, and self-actualization needs.

Data collection employed a document study combined with a "read-and-note" technique. The researcher conducted an intensive reading (close reading) of the novel to gain a comprehensive understanding of the story's content, subsequently noting down excerpts relevant to the research focus. These excerpts were then classified according to the need categories in Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs theory to facilitate the analysis process.

Data validity was ensured through theoretical triangulation, comparing interpretations derived from the psychology of literature and Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs theory with relevant findings from previous research. Theoretical triangulation was utilized to enhance the credibility of the research findings, ensuring that the resulting interpretations did not rely on a single theoretical perspective.

The data analysis technique follows the interactive analysis model proposed by Miles and Huberman, comprising three stages: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. In the data reduction stage, the researcher selects excerpts related to the psychological state of the character Alie. The data display stage involves categorizing these excerpts according to Abraham Maslow's five levels of needs and subsequently describing the character's psychological representation based on the textual evidence found. The final stage involves drawing conclusions by interpreting the

relationship between the use of literary language and Alie's psychological state, grounded in Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs theory. The entire analysis process is conducted iteratively until consistent findings are obtained that address the research objectives.

RESULTS

The research findings indicate that the character Alie in the novel *Rumah untuk Alie* by Lenn Liu represents the five levels of needs within Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs theory: physiological needs, safety needs, love and belonging needs, esteem needs, and self-actualization needs. These representations are identified through narrative, dialogue, diction, emotional expressions, and internal monologues that depict the character's psychological state.

1. Findings on Physiological Needs

Physiological needs are represented through Alie's physical condition, which is compromised by psychological stress. This is evident in the following excerpt:

"Even though she had lost her appetite, Alie knew she had to keep eating, or she would fall ill." (Liu, 2024:13)

The excerpt demonstrates that emotional stress caused Alie to lose her appetite, thereby disrupting her physiological needs. Nevertheless, Alie strives to meet this basic need to maintain her physical well-being.

2. Findings on Safety Needs

Safety needs are represented through the experiences of physical violence Alie endures within her family environment. "Alie's torment did not end in her father's study. Abimanyu proceeded to drag Alie toward the storage room." (Liu, 2024:135)

This excerpt demonstrates that Alie loses her sense of security due to the abusive treatment she receives from her own father. The family, which ought to be a sanctuary, instead becomes a source of threat to her.

3. Findings on the Need for Love and Belonging

The need for love and belonging emerges as the most dominant need in the novel.

"Big brother, can I have a hug? Just once, please. Please hug Alie." (Liu, 2024:122)

This excerpt illustrates the magnitude of Alie's need for love, attention, and acceptance from her family. This simple request reveals that her need for affection remains unfulfilled.

4. Findings Regarding the Need for Esteem

The need for esteem is represented through the stigma and humiliation Alie endures.

"Don't come near me, murderer!" (Liu, 2024:132)

This quote demonstrates that Alie faces negative judgment from those closest to her. Such labels result in an unmet need for esteem and impact the character's self-worth.

5. Findings Regarding the Need for Self-Actualization

The need for self-actualization begins to emerge toward the end of the story, when Alie demonstrates the determination to rise above her circumstances.

"Alie will not give up." (Liu, 2024:254)

This quote indicates that Alie begins to develop her potential by confronting various forms of suffering and cultivating hope for the future.

Overall, the research findings indicate that the needs for safety, love and belonging, and esteem are the ones most frequently left unmet. Conversely, the need for self-actualization begins to be fulfilled toward the end of the story through the character's shift in attitude and psychological development.

The results show that Alie's psychological state can be explained through Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs theory. These five levels of needs are interconnected and shape the character's psychological development throughout the story. Physiological needs serve as the fundamental requirements—though they are occasionally disrupted by psychological stress—while the needs for safety, love and belonging, and esteem are the ones most often unfulfilled.



The need for safety is represented through experiences of physical and psychological abuse inflicted by family members. According to Maslow, the need for safety encompasses protection against both physical and emotional threats. The failure to meet this need gives rise to trauma, fear, and anxiety, all of which influence the individual's psychological development. These findings align with Endraswara (2013), who states that the inner conflicts of literary characters often arise from environmental pressures that disrupt their psychological well-being. The need for affection and a sense of belonging emerges as the most dominant need represented in the novel. Alie's desire for hugs, attention, and acceptance from her family demonstrates that the need for affection is the primary source of the character's psychological conflict. According to Abraham Maslow, the need for affection relates to an individual's need to be accepted and to belong to a social group. These findings reinforce the research by Jumiaty et al. (2022), which states that the need for affection plays a crucial role in shaping a person's emotions and personality. However, this study indicates that the failure to meet the need for affection also contributes to low self-esteem and hinders the path toward self-actualization.

Regarding the need for esteem, Alie consistently faces stigma, insults, and discriminatory treatment, causing her to feel worthless. According to Maslow, esteem is gained through recognition, respect, and positive appraisal from others. The persistent rejection Alie experiences ultimately shapes her self-perception. This finding aligns with Minderop (2018), who explains that social experiences influence the formation of an individual's self-concept and psychological state.

In contrast to the previous needs, the need for self-actualization becomes apparent toward the end of the story. Alie is able to confront her trauma, express her feelings, accept her life experiences, and build hope for the future. These findings indicate that the character's psychological development occurs gradually. Although the need

for esteem has not been fully met, Alie begins to demonstrate the capacity for self-development. This suggests that in literary works, the progression of needs does not always follow the linear path of Maslow's hierarchy.

Furthermore, this study reveals that the author employs various literary elements—such as narration, dialogue, diction, emotional expressions, and internal monologues—to represent the character's psychological state. Narration serves as the most dominant element, as it allows for a detailed portrayal of Alie's experiences, conflicts, and psychological growth. Dialogue illustrates the character's social relationships with her surroundings, while diction, emotional expressions, and internal monologues reinforce the depiction of her feelings and inner struggles, enabling the reader to gain a deeper understanding of Alie's psychological dynamics.

A strength of this study lies in its examination of all levels of needs within Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs theory and its connection of these needs to the use of literary elements as a medium for representing the character's psychology. Additionally, the in-depth analysis of the various forms of representation found in the novel provides a comprehensive picture of the protagonist's psychological development.

However, a limitation of this study is its focus on a single object of research—the novel *Rumah untuk Alie*—meaning the findings cannot be generalized to other literary works. Furthermore, this study employs only a literary psychology approach based on Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs theory; thus, there remains an opportunity for future research to utilize other psychological theories as analytical perspectives.

DISCUSSION

The research findings indicate that the character Alie in the novel *Rumah untuk Alie* by Lenn Liu embodies all levels of needs within Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs theory: physiological needs, safety needs, love and belonging needs, esteem needs, and self-

actualization needs. However, these five needs are not met in a balanced manner, thereby influencing the character's psychological development throughout the storyline.

Physiological needs are the most fundamental requirements for human survival, such as food, water, rest, and health. Analysis reveals that Alie's physiological needs were frequently compromised by the psychological stress she endured. Although her biological needs were technically met, her poor mental state caused a loss of appetite and physical exhaustion. These findings demonstrate that physiological needs are not solely determined by biological factors but are also closely linked to an individual's psychological state. This aligns with Maslow's theory, which posits that basic needs serve as the foundation for fulfilling needs at higher levels.

Furthermore, the need for safety and security was notably unmet. Throughout the story, Alie lived in a family environment rife with violence, threats, and rejection; consequently, the home—which should have been a sanctuary—became a source of fear. This situation illustrates that safety encompasses not only physical protection but also emotional security. When this need remains unfulfilled, individuals are prone to anxiety, trauma, and psychological instability. Thus, Alie's experience underscores the pivotal role the family environment plays in shaping an individual's mental health.

The need for love and belonging is the most prominently represented need in the novel. Almost all of Alie's actions and aspirations were driven by a desire for acceptance from her family. Despite enduring constant mistreatment, she persisted in trying to maintain relationships with her family members. This attitude highlights that the need for love and acceptance is a fundamental requirement that arises once safety needs have been met. The findings indicate that familial rejection not only causes emotional suffering but also hinders the character's personality development.

In addition to the need for affection, the need for esteem also frequently went unmet. The insults,

stigma, and discriminatory treatment Alie faced fostered a negative self-concept. From Maslow's perspective, the need for esteem relates to the desire to be respected, acknowledged, and trusted by others. When individuals repeatedly face negative judgments, their self-confidence erodes, and they begin to doubt their own worth. This condition is clearly evident in Alie, who frequently blames herself for events that were actually beyond her control.

In contrast to the earlier needs, self-actualization begins to emerge toward the end of the story. After enduring various hardships, Alie finds the courage to confront her past, express her feelings, and cultivate new hope for the future. This transformation signifies positive psychological growth. According to Maslow's theory, self-actualization is the stage at which an individual is able to fully realize their potential. Thus, Alie's life journey demonstrates that individuals retain the opportunity for growth, even after experiencing the unfulfillment of various psychological needs. Overall, the research findings indicate that Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs theory effectively explains the psychological dynamics of the character Alie. The failure to meet needs for safety, love, and esteem serves as the primary source of her internal conflict, while the fulfillment of the need for self-actualization marks her success in rebuilding self-confidence. These findings reveal that Alie's character development unfolds gradually, aligning with the hierarchy of needs proposed by Maslow.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that the psychological state of the character Alie in Lenn Liu's novel *Rumah untuk Alie* can be explained through Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs theory. The findings reveal that while Alie's physiological needs were met, her needs for safety, love and belonging, and esteem largely went unfulfilled due to the verbal abuse, rejection, discrimination, and unfair treatment she endured within her family environment. These conditions hindered the

character's psychological development, preventing the optimal attainment of self-actualization.

The research also shows that Alie's psychological state is represented through literary devices—such as narration, dialogue, internal monologue, diction choices, and emotional expressions—that reveal her inner struggles, suffering, and resilience in the face of life's conflicts. These results reinforce the idea that the novel serves not only as an aesthetic work but also as a medium for representing human psychological dynamics. A strength of this study lies in its comprehensive application of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs theory across all five levels, resulting in a more thorough analysis. However, the study is limited by its focus on a single protagonist in one novel and the use of a single literary-psychological approach; future research could expand the scope of the subject matter or employ other psychological approaches to yield more diverse insights.

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