

## THE FULFILLMENT OF HIERARCHY OF NEEDS IN THE MAIN CHARACTER IN MADELINE MILLER'S *CIRCE*

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### Abstrak

*Studi ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis hirarki kebutuhan hidup dan proses karakterisasi dari karakter utama didalam novel berjudul Circe karya Madeline Miller. Studi ini menggunakan metode kualitatif deskriptif untuk menganalisis hirarki kebutuhan hidup dan proses karakterisasi karakter utama. Studi ini menggunakan teori hirarki kebutuhan hidup dari Abraham Maslow sebagai teori utama dan teori karakterisasi dari Edgar V. Roberts sebagai teori pendukung. Studi ini menemukan bahwa Circe sebagai karakter utama bisa memenuhi lima hirarki kebutuhan hidup. Physiological needs terpenuhi ketika Circe berhasil memenuhi kebutuhan makanan, minuman, dan tidurnya. Safety needs terpenuhi ketika Circe bisa melindungi dirinya sendiri dari bahaya disekitarnya. Love and belonging needs terpenuhi ketika Circe berhasil menikah dengan Telemachus. Esteem-needs terpenuhi ketika Circe berhasil mendapatkan pengakuan dan bisa menghargai dirinya sendiri. Self-actualization needs terpenuhi ketika Circe berusaha untuk mengembangkan kemampuannya sebagai seorang penyihir sehingga mendapat julukan penyihir dari Aiaia. Didalam pemenuhan hirarki kebutuhan hidup, Circe selalu berusaha dengan semaksimal mungkin dalam memenuhi semua kebutuhannya sendiri.*

**Kata Kunci:** *Hirarki, Kebutuhan, Proses Karakterisasi*

### BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Literature is a kind of writing that expresses real life in a work by paying attention to aspects of experience, thoughts, and feelings (Bennet and Royle, 2004, p.35). Literary works are represented in well-ordered language in order to convey emotional meaning to the reader which can make the author's personal thoughts can reach the reader. In real life, literature represents human culture and the language used in life, then this becomes a human way to express ideas in the form of art in language. This idea arises from the activity of the author of the work, both from personal experience and the author's observations of the surrounding environment. Literary works are divided into several types, one of them is novel.

Novel presents literary works in the form of writings from the writer who engages its own history that reflect the aesthetic experience through a connected sequence of events (Gorelick, 2019, p. 140). One of the elements that hold a significant part in the novel is the character, because through character, it can bring the plot of the story to life. Character is

not only represented in humans, but also in other forms such as animals, God, etc, depending on the author. The character who builds the plot of the story is closely related to someone's personality because it determines the characterization of the character contained in a story.

Character is the general illustration of human that reflects human behavior through words, dialogues, actions, and reactions about the character. As a literary work, novel addresses the issues and problems faced by the character, which can be in the form of economic, social, political, and other issues.

For the reason that a character is related to personality and behavioristic, a character always has needs that must be fulfilled and this is closely related to the fulfillment of the hierarchy of needs of the character. Every human being has desires and needs that have to be fulfilled in their life, it makes motivation appear to reach the hierarchy of needs and achieve a satisfying life. For that reason, this study was conducted by selecting a novel entitled *Circe* as the object of the study to be analyzed using the theory of hierarchy of needs by Abraham Maslow to analyze the fulfillment of the hierarchy of needs of the main character. In fulfilling the hierarchy of needs, the main character who was originally a Goddess turned into a human, and in this condition, there is character development which is analyzed using supporting theory, namely the characterization theory by Edgar V. Roberts.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Roberts and Zweig (2012, p.56) said a character is a verbal representation of human being which presented to the reader through the depiction of actions, thoughts, descriptions, reactions, and judgments. Abrams and Harpham (2015, p. 48) stated character is the person represented in a narrative work which can be interpreted by its particular moral, intellectual, and emotional qualities by inferences from other person's reactions, while characterization is the process of gathering the information by showing and telling about the inner thoughts, feelings, and responsiveness of the character in literary work. Literary characterization has the goal to present not only the externally perceived person, but also the inner person such as expressed and unexpressed inner thoughts, aims, joys, etc that collectively make up human personalities.

In obtaining the information and identifying the character in literature, Roberts (1991, p.58) divided five ways: (1) Actions is anything done by the character which reveals who the character is through the word or something done by the character. A character often does not aware about the meaning and implications of their action. (2) Descriptions is the information about the appearance and environment of the character, generally about the physical description of the character such as their skin, facial express and etc. (3) Thoughts is the mind and emotions of the character which allow the reader to identify the personality of the character. Although the speeches of most characters are functional, they provide material from which the reader may draw conclusions. (4) Reactions which is the interaction of a character with another character that showed in what characters said about each other. In reaction, at least it should be two characters to make the reactions. Through studying what characters say about each other, the reader can increase their understanding of about the character being discussed. (5) Judgments is what the author of literary works, speaking as a

work's authorial voice, says about a character is usually accurate, and the authorial voice can be accepted factually.

Every dialogue and behavior performed by a character is not only the part of the plot but also the embodiment of humans in real life. Character develops along with the story plot. In analyzing a character, it has a relation with the psychology of literature. Psychology and literature have the same object which is human life that talks about someone's psychological condition. Physiological contents can appear in literary forms such as short story, play, and novel. Literature becomes an important source of inspiration in psychology because it explains human emotions and behavior in a scientific perspective. One of the theories in psychology of literature that have a relation with psychology is hierarchy of needs.

The theory of hierarchy of needs showed the motivation and behavior through the character's personality in a story. Maslow (2000, p. 8) stated humans are passive victims of unconscious impulses from the influence of their environment which can develop to reach the limits of their creativity towards the highest attainment of consciousness and wisdom. The human habit showed individuals tend to prioritize their individual needs. Maslow (2000, p. 17) divided the hierarchy of needs into five stages, from the lowest to the highest: (1) Physiological needs which is the most human basic needs, come in the form of biological needs such as food, water, oxygen, etc. This need for the body to complete the task of basic body survival, if a person is thirsty, they will find drink and if a person is hungry, they will find food.

(2) Safety needs which is the sense of safety in the form of the need to get protection from themselves or others, freedom from fear and chaos, and others that aimed to bring a human into a better life. The safety needs needed by each individual are different depending on where the individual lives. (3) Belonging and love needs which is the feeling of an individual to have a desire to connect with other people, such as the desire to have a partner, close friends, and the desire to marry and have children. This need is closely related to the emotional condition of an individual which strengthens humans that is life they cannot be separated from other people. (4) Esteem needs which lead humans to have self-respect and be respected by others, these needs have a psychological impact in the form of self-confidence, value, strength, and other positive impacts. (5) Self-actualization which is the highest need that allows an individual to develop, such as changes in perception, and having more motivation to grow and develop their skills. In order to achieve this need, there must be the satisfaction of four needs before, because it makes individuals can immediately be focused on the direction of their purpose in life. With self-actualization, someone will be able to show something exactly how someone feels about something often difficult to express, or it can be determining factor in how a person is connected or understands themselves.

## METHODOLOGY

This study used qualitative descriptive analysis. Qualitative research begins with assumptions and the use of interpretation that inform the study of research problems addressing the meaning individual or group ascribe to a social or humans problems which produce complex description and interpretation of the problem (Cresswell, 2013, p.44). This study presented the analysis of the characterization process and hierarchy of needs of the main character in the novel entitled *Circe* written by Madeline Miller. Since this study presented the analysis about the novel in psychological aspects dealing with the hierarchy of

needs theory from Abraham Maslow, this study included in the scope of the psychology of literature.

In collecting the data, the first step is reading the novel to obtain the understanding of the novel then continuing by identifying and check-listing the data related to the problem formulation, and determining Circe's character through the validation of the character's term according to psychological term. After collecting the data, it continued by processing the data collected. First, categorizing the data into the suitable stages, then analyzing and interpreting the data by applying the theory of characterization by Edgar V. Roberts and the hierarchy of needs theory by Abraham Maslow. It ended with concluding as the final result of the study based on process-oriented data.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

In the beginning, Circe as the main character is a weak character who discovers her witchcraft ability which turned her into a powerful character. Circe is a Goddess, the daughter of Helios, God of the sun. She lives in Helios Palace. Everything she needs is readily available without her having to do anything, and she did not have the will to do things alone. Circe just does what she finds fun, lying at her father's feet, going to the feasts of the Gods, and wearing fancy clothes.

*I could do what I like at those times: light a torch and run to see the dark flames follow me. **Lie on the smooth earth floor** and wear small holes in its surface with my fingers. There were no grubs or worms, though I didn't know to miss them. Nothing lived in those halls, except for us. (p. 10)*

Circe as a Goddess has pessimistic character in the beginning, it can be seen in the sentences **lie on the smooth earth floor**, it means she just do nothing because all of her needs has been provided by their servants, it makes Circe has no desire to change her flat life. But, after she is exiled to and island named Aiaia, Circe need to provide her own needs such as food and water, as seen on the following:

***"I was hungry so I went to the pantry**, where the bowls brimmed with enough food to feed a hundred. I spooned some onto a plate and sat at one of the great oak tables in the hall. I could hear the sound of my breath...." (p. 63)*

There is the development of characterization of Circe when she lived in Helios' palace and Aiaia Island. In Helios palace, she has pessimistic character and has no desire to changes the way she lived, but after exiled, her pessimistic character turned to ambitious which can be seen from her actions that fulfilled her own physiological needs. She has ambitions and think that is not a problem for her to provide herself food and drink to fulfill her hunger and thirst because she is alone in that island. Circe got enough food and not starving even though she is alone. It makes her feel more independent because she can fulfill her own necessary as a Goddess who usually receive the service and rarely do their activity just by themselves.

Circe's pessimistic character developed into ambitious before and after being exiled, proving that there was a change in the characterization process that Circe experienced. Then, the character that developed makes Circe able to fulfill her needs by herself.

After fulfilling the physiological needs, the next stage in hierarchy of needs is safety needs which arises also after Circe is exiled to Aiaia. When Circe still living in Helios' palace, she receive a sense of security and protection from her father, so it makes her has humble character which is proved by her respectful behavior to her uncles. But, after being exiled to Aiaia, she began to felt lack of security and protection because she is a woman who lived alone at an island:

*"Until that moment **I had not known how many things I feared.** Huge, ghostly leviathans slithering up the hillside, nightworms squirming out of their burrows, pressing their blind faces to my door. Goat-footed gods eager to feed their savage appetites, pirates muffling their oars in my harbor, planning how they would take me..."* (p. 64)

Circe felt remarkable fears about all the thing beside her would hurt her. She felt nothing but only worry and unsafe feeling because she has no power to protect herself. She worried about leviathans, the night worms, and pirates. The fear and worry peaked when a group of men came to Aiaia Island. Circe welcomes them and humbly provides them with food. But, after several times Circe realized they had bad intentions toward her. Circe realized that she only had the magical abilities of the plants she had previously learned. Then, she cast a spell on the food and drink she had previously given the potion to, and slowly the men who were intent on her were instantly killed.

*"As it turned out, I did kill pigs that night after all."* (p. 140)

Circe's character, which was originally humble, develops into cruel after facing a situation that makes her cornered and requires her to use her magic to protect herself from the threats around her. The development of this characterization makes Circe able to fulfill her safety needs by protecting herself and giving her the freedom to do things that can prevent her from danger.

After being able to fulfill the physiological needs and safety needs by herself, the next stages of the hierarchy of needs is love and belonging needs, which appeared when Circe was still living in the Helios palace. One time she met a young man named Glaucos who was an ordinary human. Circe fell in love with him and tried to get Glaucos's love.

*"I loved his face in those moments, glowing with power and joy... I still dreamed of lying with him in those dark woods, **but I had begun to think beyond that, to say to myself new words: marriage, husband.**"* (p.41)

Circe loves Glaucos for who he is and stand selfish that she has wish that she will be able to live with Glaucos. Until one day, Circe discovered that she had the ability to control magic when she succeeded in turning Glaucos into a God. Circe was very happy to know this, it means that she would be able to continue living together with Glaucos. However, after becoming the God, Glaucos falls in love with another nymph named Scylla. Knowing that she has magical powers, Circe used her power and turns Scylla into a monster and selfishly thinks that Glaucos will return to her.

However, everything that happened was not according to what she had thought. Because after the God found out that Circe had magical powers, she was instead exiled to an island called Aiaia. After being exiled, Circe is still trying to find her true love. She was in a relationship with Hermes, God of Olympus, but they both got bored and chose to end the relationship. Later, Circe has a relationship with Daedalus and later also separated because Daedalus died after losing his son named Icarus.

Then, Circe had a relationship with Odysseus who was the prince of Ithaca. However, Odysseus was a free-spirited and adventurous person. In addition, Odysseus was someone who already had a wife and a son. However, Circe selfishly still wants to be with Odysseus. Circe's relationship with Odysseus again ended because Odysseus died from the poison of the Trygon's tail brought by Telegonus, Circe's son. Circe can finally fulfill her love and belonging needs when she meets Telemachus:

*"We have a daughter, and then another. Penelope attends my birthing bed. There is pain, but it passes. **We live on the island when the children are young and visit often after...**" (p.281)*

Circe finally can accept the situation that she loves Telemachus. And slowly Circe's selfish character turns lovable after she understands that having someone is not only her own but also belongs to their family and children. After the explanation above, it can be seen that Circe could fulfill her love and belonging needs by the presence of Telemachus and their children. Circe's character that develops during the fulfillment of love and belonging needs proves that this need must be met by people around Circe, so Circe requires interaction with other people around her.

After the three hierarchy of needs above have been met, the next stage of the hierarchy of needs is esteem-needs, namely the need for recognition from others. So, this need must also be fulfilled by other people around Circe.

*"I brought a withered flower back to life. I banished flies from my house. I made the cherries blossom out of season and turned the fire vivid green. If Aeëtes had been there, he would have choked on his beard to see such kitchen-tricks. **Yet because I knew nothing, nothing was beneath me.**" (p.67)*

Circe has an insecure character which makes her do not confident with her abilities. Her brothers and sister also possess magical abilities just like her. However, even though Circe has learned to control her magic, Circe still feels insecure about her abilities when compared to her siblings. Circe still felt that she did not know much about magic and always felt that something was lacking in her abilities. Later, Circe received a message from Pasiphae to help her give birth and at the same time visit her palace in Crete

*"He spread his hands, deft-looking and thickened with muscle. "Pardon, lady, I can say no more, but she bids me tell you that if you do not help her there is no one else who can. It is your art she wants, lady. Yours alone."  
So Pasiphaë had heard of my powers and decided they could be of use to her. **It was the first compliment I had had from her in my life.**" (p.79)*

For the first time in her life, Circe felt that she was getting compliments that matched her abilities. Finally, someone realized that Circe has the ability to get praise and recognition like other people. After this incident, Circe became braver to express herself and her abilities.

So, it can be concluded that there has been a character development which showed in the characterization process in Circe, from being insecure about her ability to brave in revealing and expressing her abilities in front of others. It means, in addition to being able to get praise and recognition from others as a fulfillment of esteem needs, Circe also has self-respect for herself. Thus, in the fulfillment of esteem needs, this need is met by Circe herself and also by other people around Circe.

After fulfilling four stages hierarchy of needs, the last one is self-actualization, namely the needs that require someone to explore the potential that exists inside them. Circe is a Goddess, the daughter of the God of the sun named Helios who has extraordinary powers, while Circe was just a child who did not have any abilities and powers like a God. Circe knew nothing except the palace of Helios and Oceanos, and the feast of the Gods. Until one day she met an uncle named Prometheus who was punished for giving fire to humans. After that, Circe became curious about humans, while constantly overthinking about her strength and what she could do.

After a few times, Circe meets Glaucos, her first love. Once, Circe saw yellow flowers that grew from the blood of Knossos. The voice inside her head led Circe to touch the flower and said that the power of the flowers lies in its roots. Circe follow the sound in her head, and Circe managed to turn Glaucos into a God. After that, Circe also turned Scylla into a monster which makes her exiled to an island named Aiaia Island.

*My powers lapped upon themselves like waves. I found I had a knack for illusion, summoning shadow crumbs for the mice to creep after, making pale minnows leap from the waves beneath a cormorant's beak...*

...

*But Aeëtes had been right, my greatest gift was transformation, and that was always where my thoughts returned.” (p. 67)*

However, after being exiled, Circe became increasingly curious and overthinking about her power. Then, she decided to learn and develop her abilities as a magician. After her hard study and spending a long time, Circe managed to find out that her greatest ability is a spell to change illusions. Circe character who was originally overthinking everything slowly turned into strong because Circe was able to control what was inside her.

After digging deeper, Circe discovered the fact that she could only change from, but not with nature, characteristics, thoughts, and instincts of the creatures that she had changed its form. Circe realized that it turned out that she had magic abilities twice stronger compared with Pasiphae.

By realizing her capability and limit, Circe continued to try her best to protect the island and her son from the Olympian Divinity, Athena, the Goddess of war, who intends to take her son from her. Then, Circe used her strongest spell to protect the island from Athena.

Then, by knowing her best ability which is to change the form, Circe used her ability against herself and transforms into a human. Circe grew stronger and stronger. So, it can be concluded that the development of her character shown in the characterization process help Circe in fulfilling her self-actualization needs, Circe fulfills this need by herself by continuing to learn and not giving up on her abilities.

## CONCLUSIONS

Circe has successfully fulfilled the five stages hierarchy of needs in her life, namely physiological needs, safety needs, love and belonging needs, esteem needs, and self-actualization.

In fulfilling the hierarchy of needs of life, Circe as the main character always tries her best to fulfill all her needs. Circe's needs must be met by people around her and by herself, thus in achieving the five stages hierarchy of needs, Circe interacts with the people around her and cause the development of character showed in characterization process.

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