

The Fulfilled of Love and Belonging Needs in Elizabeth as the Main Character of Pride and Prejudice Novel: Psychological Approach

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the fulfilment of love and belonging needs in Elizabeth Bennet, the central character of Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*, using a psychological approach based on Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs. The research examines how Elizabeth navigates relationships, personal growth, and societal expectations to achieve emotional fulfilment. By analysing her interactions with family members, friends, and Mr. Darcy, the study highlights the challenges and resolutions that shape Elizabeth's journey. Misunderstandings, prejudices, and class differences initially hinder Elizabeth's ability to feel love and belonging, but through mutual respect and emotional growth, these needs are ultimately fulfilled. This qualitative research uses descriptive analysis and intrinsic-extrinsic techniques to reveal the causes and effects of Elizabeth's emotional journey, emphasizing the importance of trust, mutual understanding, and personal growth in fulfilling psychological needs. The findings underscore the complexities of relationships and personal development in achieving love and belonging, offering insights into human behaviour and motivation as reflected in literature.

Keywords: Character; Novel; Psychological

INTRODUCTION

Human needs are fundamental not only for survival but also for leading a fulfilling and meaningful life. These needs are generally divided into two broad categories: physical and psychological. Physical needs include necessities such as food, water, shelter, clothing, and air, while psychological needs encompass elements like love, happiness, security, attention, and a sense of self-worth. According to McKinley Runyan (2008), the fulfilment of both types of needs is essential to achieving a sense of wholeness and personal satisfaction. Without satisfying psychological needs, individuals may experience feelings of emptiness, isolation, or dissatisfaction, even when their physical needs are met.

The exploration of these needs often appears in literary works, where characters' motivations, behaviors, and relationships can be better understood through psychological lenses. Literature provides a rich medium to reflect the complexities

of human emotion and development, offering readers insight into universal human experiences. One particularly influential framework for understanding these needs is Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, which classifies human motivation into five levels: physiological, safety, love and belonging, esteem, and self-actualization. This theory, grounded in humanistic psychology, emphasizes that individuals must satisfy lower-level needs before progressing to higher ones.

This paper adopts Maslow's framework to analyze *Pride and Prejudice* by Jane Austen, focusing on the psychological development of Elizabeth Bennet, the novel's central character (Septiana & Fatmasari, 2024). Specifically, the study investigates how Elizabeth navigates and fulfills her need for love and belonging, a central level in Maslow's hierarchy that underscores the importance of social connection, emotional intimacy, and acceptance. Elizabeth's journey is shaped by her complex relationships—with family members, friends, and especially Mr. Darcy—which reflect both internal desires and external societal pressures. Her pursuit of emotional fulfillment is not only a personal quest but also a response to the rigid social structures of Regency-era England.

By examining Elizabeth's emotional struggles, interpersonal dynamics, and moments of personal growth, this study aims to illustrate how her psychological needs influence her decisions, relationships, and character arc. The analysis reveals how challenges such as prejudice, pride, and class-based expectations obstruct her path to emotional satisfaction and how resolution and mutual understanding ultimately enable her to meet these needs. Through this psychological lens, the research not only deepens the understanding of Elizabeth Bennet's character but also highlights the broader human themes embedded in Austen's novel.

In doing so, the study contributes to literary and psychological scholarship by demonstrating how the integration of psychological theory can enhance character analysis and illuminate the human motivations that drive narrative progression. Ultimately, this research underscores the enduring relevance of psychological needs in literature and life, showing how characters like Elizabeth Bennet exemplify the universal quest for love, connection, and belonging..

LITERATURE REVIEW

Psychological Approach to Literature

Bennett & Royle (2004) describe the process of defining literature as both unique and enigmatic, as it focuses on delving into human thoughts and emotions. This study incorporates Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs theory, which categorizes human needs into five sequential levels, as illustrated below. According to Maslow, each level of need must be fulfilled before an individual can advance to the next, highlighting the step-by-step progression of human motivation and development.

Physiological Needs

At the base of Maslow's hierarchy are physiological needs, including essentials such as food, water, and oxygen. These needs are distinct from others for two reasons: they are the only needs that can be completely satisfied, and they are cyclical once fulfilled, they require replenishment over time (McKinley Runyan, 2008).

Safety Needs

Once physiological needs are adequately met, safety needs emerge. These encompass physical security, stability, protection, and freedom from harm. Safety needs also include the desire for order, structure, and adherence to laws, which are fundamental for ensuring survival and fostering a sense of stability.

Love and Belonging Needs

After safety needs are fulfilled, the focus shifts to love and belonging. This stage includes the need to form meaningful relationships, experience a sense of belonging, and establish social connections with family, friends, and the broader community. According to Maslow, giving and receiving love alleviates feelings of loneliness and fear of rejection, and these needs can be fulfilled through familial bonds, friendships, and intimate relationships (Ruth & Satria, 2020).

Esteem Needs

Following the satisfaction of love and belonging needs, individuals seek esteem. This includes a desire for self-respect, acceptance by others, recognition, and meaningful contributions. When esteem needs are met, individuals experience increased confidence, a sense of capability, and heightened life satisfaction, leading to greater productivity and personal fulfillment.

Self-Actualization Needs

At the pinnacle of Maslow's hierarchy lies self-actualization the aspiration to realize one's full potential. Maslow encapsulated this idea with the statement, "*What a man can be, he must be.*" Self-actualization reflects the drive for personal growth, creative expression, and the pursuit of a meaningful life purpose. It is achieved only after the preceding needs are largely satisfied and represents the goal in human development.

METHOD

Design and Sample

This study employs a qualitative research design grounded in the researcher's close observation of Elizabeth Bennet, the central character in Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*. As stated by Sugiyono (2014), qualitative research investigates phenomena in natural settings, with the researcher serving as the primary instrument for data collection and interpretation. The study focuses specifically on identifying the causes and effects related to the fulfilment of Elizabeth's psychological needs for love and belonging. Through an in-depth character analysis within the novel, the research seeks to understand how Elizabeth's relationships and emotional development contribute to her overall sense of connection and acceptance.

Instruments and Procedures

The main instrument in this study is the researcher, who collected data through the documentation method. Documentation refers to the collection and examination of existing records related to past events, which may include written texts, images, or significant literary works. In this context, the primary source is the novel *Pride and Prejudice*, from which relevant passages and character interactions were selected and interpreted. The researcher carefully examined Elizabeth's dialogues, actions, and relationships to gather meaningful insights into her psychological journey.

Data Analysis

The collected data were analyzed using a qualitative descriptive approach, supported by intrinsic and extrinsic literary analysis techniques. The intrinsic approach focuses on elements within the literary work itself, such as character, plot, and setting, while the extrinsic approach considers external factors such as psychological theories and social context. Through these combined techniques, the researcher interpreted how Elizabeth's emotional experiences reflect the fulfilment of her need for love and belonging. The findings are presented descriptively, using detailed explanations in narrative form, in alignment with Creswell's (1995) guidance on qualitative reporting.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Elizabeth's sense of belonging begins with her close relationship with Jane, her eldest sister. She shares a deep bond with Jane, evident in her supportive attitude and open communication.

"You are too good. Your sweetness and disinterestedness are really angelic; I do not know what to say to you. I feel as if I had been doing wrong."
(Elizabeth to Jane, Chapter 4)

This quotation reflects Elizabeth's care and admiration for Jane, showcasing the love and connection they share within their family unit. The deep connection between the sisters creates a safe emotional space for Elizabeth, where she can express her thoughts freely and feel genuinely understood. Their relationship fulfills Elizabeth's psychological need for love and belonging within her family unit, offering her stability and emotional resilience. This bond also provides a contrast to the flaws of other family members, such as her mother's frivolity and her younger sisters' recklessness, making her connection with Jane even more significant in shaping her character and emotional well-being.

Moving beyond her familial relationships, Elizabeth's evolving connection with Mr. Darcy illustrates how she finds a deeper sense of belonging through romantic love and mutual respect. Elizabeth's relationship with Mr. Darcy evolves from misunderstanding and resentment to mutual respect and deep love, fulfilling her emotional need for a genuine and equal partnership.

"You must allow me to tell you how ardently I admire and love you." (Mr. Darcy to Elizabeth, Chapter 34)

While Darcy's first proposal fails to fulfil Elizabeth's emotional needs due to its condescending tone, his later proposal reflects his growth and their mutual understanding. This development represents Elizabeth's fulfilment of her need for love as she finds a partner who values her individuality. Elizabeth's rejection of this proposal becomes a turning point for both characters. Darcy reflects on his shortcomings and begins to change his approach, striving to become more considerate and humbler. His actions, such as aiding Lydia's marriage to save the Bennet family's reputation and treating Elizabeth's relatives with kindness, demonstrate his growth. For Elizabeth, these gestures reveal a new side of Darcy, prompting her to reassess her prejudices and recognize his virtues. By the time Darcy proposes again, their relationship has matured into one of mutual understanding and respect. Elizabeth, having overcome her own biases, sees Darcy as a partner who values her intellect, independence, and character. This transformation fulfills Elizabeth's emotional need for love that is rooted in equality, mutual growth, and genuine connection. Their eventual union reflects not just romantic love but also a deep partnership where both individuals accept and complement one another. Through this journey, Elizabeth achieves a significant aspect of Maslow's "love and belonging" needs, finding not only a life partner but also a profound emotional connection.

Elizabeth's sense of belonging continues to grow as she navigates the complexities of her relationships, both within her family and in the broader societal context. Elizabeth gains a sense of belonging through her eventual acceptance by those around her, including Darcy's family. After their reconciliation, Lady Catherine's opposition highlights Elizabeth's newfound confidence in her place beside Darcy.

"He is a gentleman; I am a gentleman's daughter; so far we are equal."
(Elizabeth to Lady Catherine, Chapter 56)

This statement is significant because it represents Elizabeth's realization that her value is not determined by wealth or social standing alone. She recognizes that she is deserving of love and respect, not only from Darcy but also from the society around her. By asserting her equality with Darcy, she rejects the idea that her social status is an obstacle to her happiness or that she needs to conform to the expectations of Lady Catherine or other members of the upper class. This moment reflects Elizabeth's growing self-confidence and her understanding that her worth is based on her character, not on superficial distinctions of wealth or birth. This declaration also signals Elizabeth's newfound sense of belonging in Darcy's world, as she no longer feels inferior to him or his family. Their relationship, based on mutual respect and understanding, allows Elizabeth to feel that she truly belongs, not because of her wealth or status, but because of her own integrity and personal qualities. Through this, Elizabeth fulfils her need for love, respect, and belonging, both in her own family and in the broader social world. Elizabeth's relationship with her father highlights her need for belonging within her family. Mr. Bennet's approval of her decision to marry Darcy underscores her fulfilment of familial love and support.

"I could not have parted with you, my Lizzy, to anyone less worthy."
(Mr. Bennet to Elizabeth, Chapter 59)

This moment affirms Elizabeth's emotional fulfilment, as her father acknowledges Darcy's worthiness and her happiness. Furthermore, this moment underscores Elizabeth's need for love and support within her family. While her relationship with her mother and sisters can sometimes be strained or shallow, her connection with her father is deeper and more significant. Mr. Bennet's support of her marriage to Darcy helps her feel that she belongs, not only in Darcy's world but also within her own family, where her choices and happiness are recognized and supported. In essence, Mr. Bennet's approval and support fulfil Elizabeth's need for emotional security and love from her family. It shows that her decision to marry Darcy is not just her own personal achievement but one that is also embraced by those who love her, particularly her father, whose approval she values deeply. This fulfilment of familial love strengthens Elizabeth's sense of belonging, both in her family and in her marriage to Darcy. Elizabeth's love for her family extends even to her younger sister Lydia, despite Lydia's impulsive and reckless behavior.

"I am not afraid of your doing all that you can to expose me."
(Elizabeth to Lydia, Chapter 46)

This quote shows Elizabeth's protective nature toward Lydia. Although Lydia often acts impulsively, Elizabeth still shows a strong sense of responsibility for her sister's actions. This is an example of Elizabeth's love for her family and how, despite Lydia's faults, Elizabeth's emotional need for family closeness is met.

Elizabeth is also deeply supportive of Jane's love for Mr. Bingley. She recognizes her sister's feelings and wants to see her happy, even if it means helping Jane navigate difficult situations.

"You are too generous to trifle with me. If your feelings are still what they were last April, tell me so at once."
(Elizabeth to Jane, Chapter 34)

In this line, Elizabeth is encouraging Jane to be honest about her feelings toward Mr. Bingley. Elizabeth's support is a sign of her deep love and connection with Jane. It shows that Elizabeth fulfills her emotional need for family love by being a caring and supportive sister. Aunt Gardiner is another source of emotional security for Elizabeth, as she offers genuine advice and support, especially when Elizabeth is struggling with her feelings for Darcy.

"You are too generous to trifle with me. If your feelings are still what they were last April, tell me so at once."
(Elizabeth to Aunt Gardiner, Chapter 43)

Here, Elizabeth confides in Aunt Gardiner, seeking her advice about Mr. Darcy. This shows that Elizabeth feels safe and valued in her aunt's company. Aunt Gardiner's support helps Elizabeth deal with her complex emotions, fulfilling her need for emotional support and belonging. At first, Elizabeth has a negative view of Mr. Darcy, but as she gets to know him better, her feelings change. She begins to appreciate him for who he truly is.

"You must allow me to tell you how ardently I admire and love you."
(Mr. Darcy to Elizabeth, Chapter 34)

Mr. Darcy's heartfelt proposal marks the moment when he truly understands Elizabeth's worth. His admiration for her is sincere, and it shows how Elizabeth's need for love and respect is fulfilled in this relationship. Darcy's respect for her individuality fulfills her emotional need for a partner who sees her as an equal. Elizabeth plays an important role in bridging the gap between Darcy's wealthy family and her own less fortunate one. As she navigates this delicate situation, her relationship with Darcy strengthens.

"I am not a romantic, you know. I never was. I only ask for a good opinion of my own character."
(Elizabeth to Mr. Darcy, Chapter 58)

In this quote, Elizabeth demonstrates her belief in her worth, regardless of social class. She asserts that she does not need to be a romantic but simply needs respect and recognition for who she is. This shows Elizabeth's growing confidence and her desire to belong to a world where she is valued for her true self. Elizabeth's

emotional growth is reflected in her marriage to Darcy. Throughout the novel, she learns to understand and love him for who he truly is.

"I could not have parted with you, my Lizzy, to anyone less worthy."
(Mr. Bennet to Elizabeth, Chapter 59)

Mr. Bennet's approval of Darcy confirms Elizabeth's emotional fulfilment. Her father acknowledges that Darcy is worthy of her, which brings Elizabeth comfort and further fulfils her emotional need for love and support from her family. This moment represents her fulfilment in both her romantic and familial relationships. Ultimately, Elizabeth's growth in her relationships and her journey toward understanding Darcy help her fulfil her emotional needs. She no longer just seeks love or approval from others but is content with her self-respect and her place in the world.

"I was not the least surprised at his continuing to love me after he had known me so long."
(Elizabeth reflecting on Darcy's feelings, Chapter 58)

This reflection shows Elizabeth's deep emotional fulfilment. She now recognizes her worth and understands that Darcy's love for her is genuine. This realization marks the culmination of her emotional and psychological journey toward self-actualization, where she is at peace with who she is and where she belongs.

In *Pride and Prejudice*, Elizabeth Bennet's journey towards fulfilling her love and belonging needs is shaped by several factors that both hinder and eventually help her emotional growth. Initially, Elizabeth's failure to recognize Mr. Darcy's genuine affection for her prevents her from feeling truly loved and accepted. Her prejudices and judgments about his pride create a barrier to the emotional connection she could have had with him, delaying her fulfilment of these needs. For example, when Darcy first confesses his love for Elizabeth, she rejects him due to his perceived arrogance and his condescending views about her family. This causes her to feel that his love is not genuine. Additionally, social class plays a significant role in Elizabeth's emotional journey. Her awareness of the class differences between her family and Darcy's adds tension to her sense of belonging. Darcy's initial proposal, where he references her family's lower status, offends Elizabeth and reinforces her feelings of insecurity regarding her place in society.

Furthermore, Elizabeth's relationships within her family, particularly with her father, also influence her need for love and belonging. While her father expresses support for her decision to marry Darcy, Elizabeth often feels emotionally unsupported due to her family's lack of communication and the scandal caused by Lydia's behavior. Despite these struggles, Elizabeth's emotional fulfilment begins to take shape when Darcy demonstrates personal growth. His second proposal, made with humility and respect, signals his deeper understanding of her as an individual and fulfills her need for love and acceptance. This transformation in their

relationship illustrates how mutual respect and understanding can lead to the fulfillment of emotional needs, allowing Elizabeth to finally experience the love and belonging she longed for throughout the novel (Austen, 2006).

CONCLUSION

This research concludes that the fulfillment of love and belonging needs in Elizabeth Bennet, the main character in *Pride and Prejudice*, is shaped by two key aspects: the causes of her initially unfulfilled emotional needs and the effects of their eventual resolution. The study reveals that misunderstandings, rigid societal expectations, and Elizabeth's early prejudices—particularly her misinterpretation of Mr. Darcy's character are central causes that hinder her emotional fulfillment. Her skepticism toward Darcy's intentions, influenced by his pride and their class differences, prevents her from accepting his affection and experiencing emotional closeness.

These unfulfilled needs result in emotional conflict and dissatisfaction, especially after her rejection of Darcy's initial proposal. The emotional distance created by social pressure and personal misjudgment delays her ability to experience the love and connection she desires. However, as the narrative progresses and both Elizabeth and Darcy grow personally and emotionally, their relationship transforms. Through increased mutual understanding and emotional maturity, Elizabeth's need for love and belonging is ultimately fulfilled. This journey highlights the complexities of navigating societal norms, personal biases, and emotional growth in achieving psychological well-being and relational satisfaction.

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