



**THE PURSUIT OF SELF-ESTEEM IN PHYLLIS WHITNEY'S NOVEL
"HUNTER'S GREEN"**

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Abstract

This study analyses Phyllis Whitney's novel "Hunter's Green". The problem of this study is to what extent the novel reveals the pursuit of Self-Esteem and how the elements of novel; character and setting support the pursuit of self-esteem. The result of the study shows that there are three features of pursuit of self-esteem conducted by the character Nigel Barrow. They are building awareness, getting support, and gaining position. Building awareness is revealed through the condition of Nigel, as a low class person, lives in a high-class family, Athmore, which is full of superiority. He realizes his positive value; superior in brain and has the same chance to enter the school just like the high class does. Gaining support is revealed through the condition in which Nigel lives among people who judge him low. He proves himself to get support from his society. Gaining position is by having position as an educated and privileged person through attaining a prestigious school. He attains the school by winning himself a difficult scholarship. It gives a sense of satisfaction and pride on himself since his condition born as low class. Nigel also gets position as a wealthy person through doing precious business in the field of building and real estate in Bahamas. This is part of Nigel's pursuit of self-esteem since Nigel gets it in a competitive condition. This condition enriches his view on himself as a worthy person who has potentials and capabilities. Hopefully, there must be something to learn in the literary work in spite of its mere function as entertainment.

Kata Kunci: *pursuit, self-esteem*

Abstrak

Studi ini adalah analisa novel Phyllis Whitney *Hunter's Green*. Permasalahan yang dibahas dalam analisa ini adalah sejauh mana novel ini memperlihatkan pengejaran harga diri (The Pursuit of Self-Esteem) dan bagaimana elemen-elemen novel yang difokuskan kepada character (tokoh) dan setting (latar) mendukung pengejaran harga diri tersebut. Tujuan dari analisa ini adalah untuk mendapatkan jawaban sejauh mana novel *Hunter's Green* memperlihatkan pengejaran self-esteem dan bagaimana elemen setting dan character mendukung pengejaran self-esteem dalam novel ini. Dari penganalisaan didapatkan bahwa tokoh Nigel Barrow, yang berasal dari status rendah melakukan berbagai usaha untuk mengejar harga dirinya. Usahanya itu adalah dengan membangun kesadaran akan potensi dirinya dan keberhargaannya dirinya (building awareness) dengan meraih dukungan dari lingkungan (gaining support) dan dengan meraih posisi ditengah-tengah masyarakatnya (gaining position). Usaha-usaha yang dilakukan Nigel ini adalah bagian dari pengejaran harga diri karena dia merasa puas dan bangga akan kemampuannya dalam kondisi kompetitif.

Keyword: *pursuit and self-esteem*

INTRODUCTION

Human beings are born with intrinsic value called self-esteem. It is an adhered fundamental component within oneself which leads humans to have feeling to be appreciated in their lives. As Edward Denims (in Quot About Self-Esteem, 2005) says “people are born with intrinsic motivation, self-esteem, dignity, curiosity to learn, and joy in learning.” We can see that all of us were born with intrinsic capabilities including self-esteem. Crocker (2003) adds in which self-esteem is assumed playing important role in people’s lives. Based on these ideas, one’s self-esteem determines the way a person is respected as well as judged by his/her society. By this way, the person is encouraged to show his/her self-esteem in order to have good social interaction and position in the society.

However, in social practice not all people have the same opportunity to show and gain their self-esteem. Yet, there is a tendency in which people differentiate between one’s self-esteem and other’s self-esteem. The differentiation is often formulated through status or social class one has. Steven (2005) states that many of us believe that we are worthwhile only if we are successful, rich, and powerful and many of us also value others to the degree they are successful, good and having status or class. This shows that there are factors influencing the way people see and value one’s self-esteem. Those who come from aristocrat family with high status will be respected than those who come from poor family with low status since they live in a society which has an idea to view people based on their status or birth. Although there is a differentiation in respecting one’s self-esteem and others’, people mainly those inferior self-esteem keep pursuing for the better one. The picture of lower status

people who pursue their need for self-esteem is found in the novel “Hunter’s Green” written by a romantic suspense author, Phyllis Whitney (1977). Nigel Barrow, one of the characters in this story, shows his pursuit for self-esteem by trying to be successful. Nigel attains school, which is arranged for people who come from high class, by the hard way while he comes from lower class. He is strongwill person. He tries to prove that he is worthy and get his own because he knows he is superior in brain than the family who adopts him that get high status by birth. There is a combination of three factors that build up this novel to be an amazing literary work. The factors are the author, the technique, and the symbolization. This story was written by the author who is regarded as a queen of romantic suspense (About Phyllis Whitney: 2005). The technique used by the author in telling story is suspense, which leads us into mystery and puzzle. To convey its idea, there is symbolization of chess game used in this story. It considers life as a chess game. Rummel (2005) said that the goal of the game is to win in a way that enhances our self-esteem and actualizes ourselves.

1. The pursuit of self-esteem

The pursuit of self-esteem is built up by two key words, which are, pursuit and self-esteem. In order to comprehend what the phrase means we need to cover each of the words first. According to dictionary of the English language (2000) the term pursuit means the act of pursuing in effort to overtake or capture. It can also be defined as an attempt to accomplish or attain. It implies that there is an effort in this action to get the goal or object.

While self-esteem in Voigt (2005) is a term used to describe how we view

ourselves as worthy person. The same opinion is also proposed by Sheslow and Luckens (2005) that self-esteem is how you see yourself and how you feel about your achievement. Reasoner (2005) states that some experts define self-esteem as merely feeling good or having positive feeling about oneself, which other equate self-esteem with egoism, arrogance, conceit, narcissism, a sense of superiority. From this opinion, it is clear that self-esteem derives from one's own self in which the person has certain belief on his/her own. There is a sense of confidence and satisfaction about oneself.

Having self-esteem leads people to have positive value on themselves that they indeed prestigious. This is supported by Stevens (2005) that people begin to see themselves as a success and begin to think that their success is a proof that they are good or better than other people. It suggests that life is changeable. Everyone is a subject to themselves who bears the intrinsic motivation to develop themselves mainly in the social life. One's success will become a motivation for another to accomplish the same success or even more.

Based on the ideas it can be inferred that the pursuit of self-esteem is the term that deals with the effort done by someone to get the goal that is the feeling to be appreciated and a confidence or satisfaction in oneself, in term of self-esteem. There is a certainty toward him/her that he/she is a worthy person and needed to be accepted or respected.

Self-esteem has much in common with other vital need in life. Research has shown that high self-esteem related to many positive qualities of mental health, life success and happiness (Steven: 2005). Self-esteem has become one vital need for human beings since it determines the quality of lives they have. The ability to achieve the self-esteem will be resulted at

certain satisfaction for those who have succeeded to gain self-esteem.

There are many experts who proposed the importance of having self-esteem. According to Sheslow and Luckens (2005) having good self-esteem is the tickets to make good choices about one's mind and body. Moreover, Garlock (2005) gives three (3) importances of having self-esteem of having self-esteem. The importances are: 1). One can live comfortably with personal strengths. 2). One can acknowledge his/her own dignity and value as a unique human being. 3). One will become more functional in daily life. For many individuals, self-esteem is powerful indicator of success. Therefore, self-esteem means a great deal since it influences the way people decide something. When they know that they have good self-esteem, they know that they are smart enough to make their own decisions. They value their safety, feelings, health-their whole self. Good self-esteem helps them to know that every part of them is worth caring for and protecting.

Self-esteem is not something that develops overnight or as a result of any single insight, decision or modification of behavior. Garlock (2005) says that self-esteem is built gradually through a willingness to work on a number of areas of life. He suggests three ways dealing with self-esteem. First, taking care of yourself. This means that the most fundamental thing for self-esteem is our willingness and ability to take care of ourselves. One should be aware of his/her positive value and there should be a good motivation to explore the value. There is nothing to be ashamed for oneself, instead-without a basic willingness and ability to care for, love, and nurture oneself, it is difficult to achieve a deep lasting experience of self-esteem. Second, developing support and intimacy in our life

is obviously a major part of taking care of ourselves. This shows that environment or societies are not responsible to develop one's self-esteem. It is the responsibility of each individual. Indeed, each person should have a belief that his/her life means a lot for him/her and for society. In this case, other people cannot give us self-esteem, but their support, acceptance, validation and love can go along way toward reinforcing and strengthening our self-esteem. Third, building skills to support our self-esteem. This means that individuals will be worthwhile and have high self-esteem only in the presence of other people. They need to be part of a group like family, work group, or community to measure or to compare for the self-esteem they have. In this case, the people are demanded to be successful in the groups and to build their ability. In other word, they should achieve the success, for example through education or career. It is important to remember that our self-esteem is partly based upon our ability to be successful as a person and as a member of group.

2. The Novel: "Hunter's Green"

This novel shows the picture of a lower class person who pursue s his self – esteem by attempting to achieve success to be accepted by society as worthwhile. This pursuit of self-esteem can be seen through character Nigel Barrow. Nigel makes effort as a part of his pursuit of self-esteem since he is a little boy.

Nigel, who comes from poor family, has willingness to attain school to get education and knowledge. Nigel attains high prestigious school by the hard way-by winning himself a difficult scholarship while Justin North, one of Athmore's heirs, a rich family, attains it by right of birth. Nigel is aware of his smartness and the ability to take care of himself by making

himself as educated person. Nigel is also aware that he is decision-maker for himself. He decides to wear cuff link with a star sapphire, which is not common in his place, Athmore.

Nigel gives wise arguments and views toward Eve who tend to be pessimistic on herself. Eve says that talking to Nigel is possible. Eve also says thank you and appreciate Nigel's help. Eve acknowledges Nigel's positive value. It enhances Nigel's positive view on himself.

When he was a child, Nigel had more or less been adopted by aristocrat family called Athmore. He has a position as high-class person since Athmore's heirs considered him one of the families. By having a position makes him aware of his own potential. It inspires him to leave Athmore and his homeland, England, to get position by his own. He goes to Bahamas at young age to make sizeable fortune by himself. He runs a precious business of building and real estate in order to gain position as wealthy person. When he gets success, he is back to Athmore along with his wealth. He feels pride on himself since he gets success by his own.

METHODOLOGY

Since the purpose of the study is to figure out human's pursuit of self-esteem in novel "Hunter's Green", its analysis applies the elements of the novel to support the meaning. The elements, which are focused in this study, are character and setting. According to Robert (1999:53) character is a verbal representation of human being. In analyzing a character or to make inference about characters we observe the characters and look for connection. There are three points that are revealed. First, the characters' actions that are what character do. Second, characters' speech that is what they say and how they

say it. Third, characters' consciousness which is what they think and feel. Setting plays a crucial role as well in formulating the idea of the novel. This element influences the way the character thinks and acts in his/her society. Guerin (1999:6) stated that setting refers to the time, and the place in the literary works. Analyzing setting means describing situation, condition, culture and atmosphere.

This study then will be conducted or analyzed through a psychosocial perspective especially through a theory of self-esteem. The study of self and self-esteem originated from psychosocial perspective that is self-esteem that has two dimensions; psychological dimension and sociological dimension. According to Allport (in Worchel, 1988:7) psychosocial or socio psychology can be defined as a discipline to understand and explain how the thought, feeling and behavior of individuals are influenced by actual, imagined or implied presence of others. It can be said that there are factors outside of individuals which influence their thought, feeling and behavior.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

There are three features of pursuit of self-esteem that are revealed in this novel.

1. Building Awareness

The fundamental thing for self-esteem is our willingness and ability to take care ourselves. Based on the idea, the main character, Nigel barrow, conducts hard pursuit to build his awareness. He shows his awareness and ability to take care of himself by attaining school. It is shown by the following quotation:

Justin had come to the school by the right of birth while Nigel Barrow had attained it the hard way by winning himself a difficult scholarship. (Page 22)

The quotation above shows that there is a gap between those who come from higher class and those from the lower class. The differentiation is practiced mainly for the right of attaining school. Generally, the higher-class people are regarded to be suitable to get education and they can get it easily. The quotation "*Justin had come to the school by the right of birth*" shows that Justin North attains school by the easy way because he has born as high-class person. On the other hand, the lower class people need to struggle in order to get into the same school. The quotation "*Nigel Barrow had attained it by the hard way*" describes how the poor child, Nigel Barrow, suffers from the distinction. This lower class condition becomes setting that triggers Nigel to fight himself, to prove that he has the same chance to get education just like the rich does. There is a strong willingness to attain school while Nigel is poor. He doesn't give up on his condition. This shows that he is aware of his value as human. Nigel shows his belief toward himself and the ability to take care of himself by making himself as educated people. Thus, his low social status is not an inhibiting factor for Nigel. It is a proof that the awareness for the positive value means a great deal to develop one's self-esteem. In addition, to build awareness, one of the ways is through having the feeling of being respected by other people or societies. It might be derived from our achievement. In other word, something good in our personality and the better thing we can do toward ourselves become a measurement to be respected. It will be a way to build satisfaction and pride on oneself. It can be seen when Nigel gives suggestion to Eve below:

"But we're still a like in some ways, you and I. you haven't outgrown in the need to

have someone tell you constantly who you are, while I've never outgrown the need to tell the world constantly who I am. I think mine is better way to prove myself. It may irritate, but it depends less on others." (Page 107)

The quotation above reveals the way Nigel presents other people the goodness of himself. He tells it in order to suggest Eve to build her awareness in positive value she has. The way is through proving herself. It is not necessary for Nigel to tell others who he is.

2. Gaining Support

The second feature of pursuit of self-esteem is gaining support. Other people cannot give us self-esteem, but their support, acceptance, acknowledge, and love can go along away toward reinforcing and strengthening our self-esteem. Nigel tries to get all of these from his society. This can be seen from Maggie and Justin's views in the case of Nigel leaving Athmore for Bahamas. As what is figured out in the quotation below:

He had come here from Bahamas on extended visit, though no one seen him in England for Years. He had gone to the islands as a young man and he'd made sizeable fortune there. But during his years away he had rather cut his ties with Athmore, as he had with England. Only Justin, returning from a trip to New York by way of Nassau had seen him a few times during that period, and then only Maggie's urging, since Justin felt that Nigel wanted to be left to go him own way alone. Not until long after his success was assured did he return to England. Then he had written Maggie, asking if he might come on visit. Maggie had welcomed him warmly and forgiven his long absence, perhaps understanding Nigel's innate pride and need he had to make his own way without further dependence on Athmore and Justin. (Page 104)

The above quotation shows Maggie and Justin's acceptance and acknowledgment on Nigel. Clearly, there are some points conveyed in the quotation. First, there is support from Justin. It can be seen in sentence "*Since Justin felt that Nigel wanted to be left to go his own alone.*" This sentence implies Justin's acceptance on Nigel's decision. It also shows Justin's acknowledgment on Nigel's capability in which Nigel able to struggle for his life by himself that implied from the phrase "*to go his own way alone*". Second, there is Maggie's acceptance on Nigel. The sentence "*Maggie had welcomed him warmly*" shows that Maggie accepts Nigel well. Clearly, the word "welcome" strengthens it. Welcome means greet somebody in friendly way when he or she arrives or accepts gladly. The word "*warmly*" shows Maggie's way in accepting Nigel, which is warm, friendly and kind.

The next point is described in utterance "*Perhaps understanding Nigel's innate pride.*" It shows that Maggie understands what Nigel wants for his life and appreciates Nigel's pride. The last, the utterance "*And the need to make his own way without further dependence on Athmore and Justin*" shows Maggie's acknowledgement on Nigel's ability in fighting for his life and to be independent. The presence of acceptance, support, and acknowledgement from his society is part of Nigel's pursuit of self-esteem. This acknowledgement and support on Nigel can be seen in Eve's respond on Nigel below:

I smile wryly at this unexpected picture of Nigel telling the world. "That's hard to believe about you. I've never heard you brag. I've never heard you tell the world a thing." He spoke with quite assurance through years of proving himself-which was

something I had never been able to do.
(Page 108)

The utterance *I've never heard you brag. I've never heard you tell the world a thing.* shows Eve acknowledges Nigel positive value. This acknowledgement is a proof that Nigel has made effort to gain support from his society. More description on this acknowledgement shown in the quotation *"He spoke with quite assurance through years of proving himself"*. Eve tends to be pessimistic on herself. Nigel often says his arguments or views to her. It is as away or effort conducted by Nigel in order to gain support from his society. As a result, Eve herself aware and understands Nigel's personality. This is shown in Eve's comment after talking with Nigel:

I had never expected to pour myself out to Nigel Barrow. Somehow he had opened the floodgates that had been closed for along time. His manner, which took me seriously, his uncritical objectivity made talking to him possible.
(Page 108)

Eve's comment *"His uncritical objectivity made talking to him possible"* is a kind of Eve's acceptance on Nigel. The presence of Eve's positive judgement toward Nigel becoming an achievement of Nigel in gaining supports. Therefore, he feels being respected or feels proud and satisfaction on himself.

3. Gaining Position

People will be worthwhile and have high self-esteem in the presence of other people. They need to be part of a group like family, work groups, and community. The person is demanded to be successful in the groups and to build his ability. In other word, he should achieve the success, for example through education and career.

Nigel tries to achieve success in education by attaining school. It is his early step to get good position in society. That is position as educated person and part of privileged community since the school he chose is the school set for high class people while he comes from lower class as what is shown in the quotation below:

Justin had come to the school by the right of birth while Nigel Barrow had attained it the hard way by winning himself a difficult scholarship. (Page 22)

Through his success in winning himself a scholarship and entering school, it implies that Nigel is a smart person because it is not easy to get scholarship except through the cleverness one has. Therefore, through Nigel's effort to attain school, there are two things found dealing with gaining position. First, Nigel attains school to get education or knowledge, as a result, in society he will be respected as an educated person or in other word he gains position as educated person. Second, Nigel gains his position as privileged person since the school he chosen is high prestigious school or the school set for high-class community. His success gives a sense of satisfaction, confidence and pride on himself.

Besides getting success in education, Nigel makes effort to success in career. This is pictured in Eve's statement about Nigel Barrow in the following quotation:

He had come here from the Bahamas on extended visit, though no one had seen him in England for years. He had gone to the islands as a young man and he'd made sizeable fortune there. But during his year away he had rather cut his ties with Athmore, as he had with England. Only Justin returning from trip to New York by way of Nassau had seen him a few times during that period, and then only Maggie's urging, since Justin felt that Nigel wanted to be left to go him own way alone. Not until long after his success

was assured did he return to England.
(Page 104)

From the quotation, at least there are three interesting points about Nigel are conveyed. First, he makes effort to get position at young age. The sentence "*He had gone to the islands as a young man*" supports this point. A young age is a transition era between child and adult. Dealing with the way of thinking, generally, people in this era or period is susceptible or not yet mature. They are still in a process of searching identity, not yet able to decide something or what they want most. But Nigel, at young age, has his own decision about his life; to make better by making sizeable fortune in other country. Second, through the sentence "*But during his year away he had rather cut his ties with Athmore*" we can see that he makes effort to get success by himself. He does not take advantage from the prestige of Athmore in which he has been part of it. Third, from the same sentence "*But during his year away he had rather cut his ties with Athmore as he had with England*" we also get the meaning Nigel leaves England, his homeland, to a place, which is strength for him. There is no one he knows and knows him. But he is able to go there and make sizeable fortune there.

In Bahamas, he runs a business and gets success in it, as what is shown in the quotation below:

His business as I recalled, had something to do with building and real estate in the Bahamas, and I gathered that he made enough money to sport jeweled cufflink if he chose. (Page 105).

The quotation above reveals Nigel's brightness in choosing the field of his business. He does not choose a common business but a bigger and precious business. The businesses are building and real estate. Nigel's effort to gain position in carrier as wealthy man is part of his pursuit of self-esteem. It is an achievement and reward for

himself. Since he, as a boy born in low class, able to decide the better thing for his life and at young age, runs himself a precious business in a strange place without taking advantage of the prestige of Athmore and gets success on it.

CONCLUSION

There are three features of pursuit of self-esteem conducted by the character Nigel Barrow. They are building awareness, getting support, and gaining position. Building awareness is revealed through the condition of Nigel, as low class person, lives in high-class family, Athmore, which is full of superiority. He realizes his positive value; superior in brain and has the same chance to enter the school just like the high class does. Nigel, as inferior, brings down the superior people. It gives a sense of satisfaction and pride on Nigel in terms of self-esteem. Gaining support is revealed through the condition in which Nigel lives among people who judge him low. However, he does not surrender to this condition. He proves himself to get support from his society. Eve acknowledges Nigel's capability. While Justin and Maggie acknowledge Nigel's potential in searching his own success in Bahamas. These acknowledgements are support for Nigel to enhance his feeling good on his capability. Gaining position, which is conducted by Nigel, is another part of his pursuit of self-esteem. He gets position as educated and privileged person through attaining prestigious school. He attains the school by winning himself a difficult scholarship. It gives sense of satisfaction and pride on himself since his condition born as low class. Nigel also gets position as wealthy person through doing precious business in the field of building and real estate in Bahamas. This is part of Nigel's pursuit of self-esteem since Nigel gets it in competitive condition. He, as a boy born in low class, able to decide the better

thing for his life and at a young age, runs himself a precious business in strange place without taking advantage on the prestige of Athmore, in which he has been part of it. This condition enriches his view on himself as worthy person who has potentials and capabilities. Hopefully, there must be something to learn in the literary work in spite of its mere function as entertainment.

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