



**ELIZABETH LACKERSTEEN'S IRRATIONAL  
BELIEFS IN *BURMESE DAYS***

**A THESIS**

**In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements**

**For S-1 Degree Majoring Literature in the English**

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## **PRONOUNCEMENT**

I honestly state that this thesis is written by myself without taking any works from other researchers in any university, in diploma degree, S-1, S-2, and S-3 degrees. I also ascertain that I do not take any material from other works except the references mentioned.

Semarang, 17<sup>th</sup> June 2022



Elena Delvira Hamzah

## MOTTO AND DEDICATION

*What good are wings,*

*Without the courage to fly.*

**Atticus, To Kill a Mockingbird.**

*This thesis is dedicated to  
My beloved dad and mom  
and those who I love the most.*

**APPROVAL**

**ELIZABETH LACKERSTEEN'S IRRATIONAL BELIEFS**

**IN *BURMESE DAYS***

Written by:

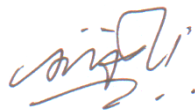
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This thesis still requires improvement since I recognize it is far from perfection. Therefore, any comment or constructive idea would always be appreciated and accepted. I hope that anyone who wishes to discover more about *Burmese Days* and learn about irrational beliefs or other related subjects will find this thesis beneficial.

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## ABSTRACT

This thesis discusses Elizabeth Lackersteen's irrational belief in *Burmese Days*, written by George Orwell. The character of Elizabeth is described as a young British woman who aims to find a rich man to become her husband. Elizabeth's experience when she was a child influenced her irrational belief. The research was conducted using qualitative and contextual methods by applying Albert Ellis's theory of irrational beliefs. This paper aims to discover the relationship between Elizabeth's childhood experiences and her irrational beliefs once she is an adult. The primary data used in the research are taken from *Burmese Days* by George Orwell, and the secondary data are taken from journals, articles, and books. This paper uses library research to collect the data. The research results show that Elizabeth's irrational beliefs are generated by her luxurious lifestyle when she was a child and get worse once she experiences poverty after her family's bankruptcy. Her irrational beliefs then got clearer once she came to Kyauktada, Burma, to live with her aunt and uncle. Her relationships with John Flory and Verral are affected by her irrational beliefs. Elizabeth's irrational belief is her 'demand' to marry a rich man and have a luxurious life due to her fear of poverty caused by her childhood experience. Elizabeth overcomes her irrational beliefs through "acceptance" of her reality, which challenges her irrational beliefs into rational ones.

Keywords: Irrational beliefs, Reality, Acceptance, Demand.

## **CHAPTER I**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **1.1 Background of The Study**

Literary works are depictions and reflections of human existence. In literary works, the author creates characters that reflect the true virtues of human nature. These characters could be a human, animals, plants, or inanimate objects. Their virtues can range from good to bad. None of the characters in the book is perfect; the same can be said of actual humans. These characters may face pain, fear, and a life-altering turning moment that they must overcome.

This proves that no matter how perfect the characters in literary works are written, they are not flawless. Some of them may experience stressful life, depression, loneliness, fear, and trauma. As a result, some of these characters may experience irrational beliefs.

Many people experience irrational beliefs, but they are not aware of them. Irrational beliefs are thoughts, beliefs, values, or attitudes held by a person who will keep them from growing emotionally. Irrational beliefs could lie unconsciously inside the person's mind without realizing it.

Albert Ellis, a psychotherapist known for his Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy (REBT), states that some causes of irrational beliefs are emotional distress, fear, and anxiety.

The writer decides to choose *Burmese Days*, written by George Orwell because the novel is one of the most famous works written by Orwell. *Burmese Days* novel was written in 1934 during Orwell's stay in Burma in his military days. The writer is interested in analyzing Elizabeth Lackersteen's irrational beliefs in *Burmese Days* because Elizabeth is the main female character in the novel.

Although the novel is about colonialism, the writer wants to discover more about the character in the novel, especially the character of Elizabeth Lackersteen.

Elizabeth Lackersteen is the main woman character in the novel. She is described as the perfect young British woman in appearance and background. She comes from a wealthy family and lives with her rich uncle and aunt in Kyauktada, Burma. However, Elizabeth's point of view towards marriage is 'unusual' and considered irrational. Her unusual perspective starts affecting her personal life and the relationship between her and the male characters in the novel.

## **1.2. Research Problems**

Specifically, three questions are addressed in this paper:

- 1) How is Elizabeth Lackersteen's childhood experience described?
- 2) How are Elizabeth Lackersteens's irrational beliefs described?
- 3) How is the childhood experience related to her irrational beliefs once she is an adult?

## **1.3. Objectives of The Study**

The objectives of this study are:

1. To discover Elizabeth Lackersteen's childhood experience.
2. To analyze Elizabeth Lackersteen's irrational belief.
3. To find the relation between Elizabeth Lackersteen's childhood and her irrational beliefs once she is an adult.

## **1.4. Previous Studies**

The writer has found five previous studies regarding the *Burmese Days* novel. First, a paper by Robert A. Lee (1969) entitled "A Symbol and Structure in *Burmese Days*: A Revaluation," This study examines how the novel's symbols depict politics and colonialism.

Second, Ana Moya (2001) wrote "Exploring Power Discourses in *Burmese Days*." Moya examines race, gender, and Orwell's Empire critique as a domination critique. John Flory is key to Orwell's critique of imperialism. He rejects ethnic dominance. The way people talk about men and women allows similar dominance, therefore he can't show he's a typical man.

Third, Urmila Seshagiri wrote "Misogyny and Anti-Imperialism in George Orwell's *Burmese Days*" (2001). Seshagiri examines the novel's main inconsistency. The criticism in the British empire came mostly through male interactions, yet it doesn't mention sexual assault against women in the empire.

Fourth, S Wimuttikosol (2009) wrote "Colonialism and Patriarchy: Interwoven Powers in *Burmese Days*' Interwoven Plots." This study shows *Burmese Days* has a parallel plot. Colonialism is intertwined with patriarchy, gender issues, and slavery.

Fifth, Natalie Stigall (2011) wrote "Memsahib and Bo-Kadaws: Feminine Imperial Authority in *Burmese Days*." This essay examines the power of Elizabeth Lackersteen and Ma Hla May in *Burmese Days*. Stigall reveals the novel's power system.

The sixth research is "Edward Said's Orientalism and Orwell's *Burmese Days*" (2011) written by S. R. Moosavinia, N. Niazi, and Ahmad Ghaforian. Using Said's

orientalism, this paper analysed the interaction between Westerners and Easterners.

Seventh, Mihaela Salariu and Al Loan Cuza (2014) wrote "Feminine Characters in *Burmese Days* and *A Clergyman's Daughter*." Salariu and Cuza analyzed Orwell's *Burmese Days* and *A Clergyman's Daughter* female characters from a feminist perspective. The study examines Orwell's view of women's role and identity in the 20th century in the social and political context of the period.

Eighth, E Shabanirad and SM Marandi (2015) wrote 'Edward Said's Orientalism and George Orwell's *Burmese Days*' using Edward Said's orientalism theory, this paper examines how oriental women are portrayed as repressed, subservient, voiceless, seductive, and promiscuous.

Ninth, Carol Biederstadt (2017) wrote "Paradoxical Orientalism: Gender and Power in George Orwell's *Burmese Days*." Biederstadt says that Orwell's imperialist attitudes are obvious in the novel, especially in his depiction of women. Ma Hla May is a victim of colonialism, not a villain, according to Biederstadt. Biederstadt uses legal, cultural, linguistic, and historical data.

Lastly, Nur Afifah, Burhannudin Arafah, and Herawaty Abbas wrote "Burmese Women Portraits under British Imperialism in Orwell's *Burmese Days*" (2022). This study analyses the novel's female characters using Laurenson and

Swingewood's sociological method, in which women in the novels are considered as toys for the men.

The tenth previous studies above mainly focused on the intrinsic aspects of the novel and the major theme of *Burmese Days* which are colonialism, patriarchy, and gender role. None of the previous studies above focus on the character and use a psychological approach to analyze the characters.

### **1.5 Scope of the Study**

This research focuses on Elizabeth Lackersteen's childhood experience and her irrational beliefs.

### **1.6 Writing Organizations**

This study is elaborated in four chapters through the following organizations:

#### **CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION**

This chapter presents the background of the study, problem statement, purpose, scope of the study, previous studies, and writing organization.

#### **CHAPTER II: THEORY AND METHODS**

This chapter contains the type of research, method of collecting data, and method of analyzing data. This chapter also comprises the theory of Irrational Beliefs by Albert Ellis.



### CHAPTER III: RESULT AND DISCUSSIONS

This chapter shows the result by analysing Elizabeth Lackersteen's childhood and Elizabeth's adulthood using irrational beliefs theory.

### CHAPTER IV: CONCLUSION

This chapter contains the inference based on the analysis result in the study.

## **CHAPTER II**

### **THEORY AND METHOD**

#### **2.1 Theoretical Framework**

##### **2.1.1. Intrinsic Aspects**

###### **2.1.1.1 Characters and Characterization**

Characters are figures starring in narrative work. Characters could be in the form of human beings, animals, and even inhuman objects. The reader interprets characters as figures who possess moral values, intellectual and emotional qualities based on their dialogues and action (Abrams, 2013:48).

The way the author describes their characters is called characterization. Characterization is divided into two, which are direct characterization and indirect characterization. Arp & Johnson (2018:143) state in direct characterization, the author, tells directly to the reader, by exposition or analysis, what the characters are like and how other characters in the story describe them. Meanwhile, in indirect characterization, the author shows the character through their action, behavior, and dialogues, and the reader determines what they are like through what the characters do.

### **2.1.1.2 Conflict**

The definition of conflict, according to Nicholson (1992:11), is an action that occurs between two parties but is not always rational. A conflict is defined by the parties' interests, needs, and obligations. Conflicts are divided into two categories; internal conflict and external conflict.

#### **2.1.1.2.1. The internal conflict**

An internal conflict is a conflict in which the character of the story deals with themselves. This refers to a meltdown in an individual caused by their mental state (Folarin, 2015:4). The conflict could be in the form of trauma, dilemma, weakness, fear, feelings, and emotion that the character has to overcome. The type of internal conflict that is commonly used in literary works is Man Versus Self which shows the struggle a character has to endure to overcome the conflict they had internally.

#### **2.1.1.2.2. The external conflict**

The external conflict definition is a conflict of disputes between people. Conflict, however, does not always result in a physical exchange of blows. Hatred and anger toward each other already highlight conflict (Folarin, 2015:5). Several types of external conflict often found in literary works are Man Versus Man, Man Versus Nature, Man Versus Society, Man Versus God's Fate, and Man Versus Supernatural.

## **2.1.2. Extrinsic Aspects**

### **2.1.2.1 Irrational Beliefs Theory by Albert Ellis**

Irrational beliefs are thoughts, beliefs, values, or attitudes held by a person that will keep them from growing emotionally. Irrational beliefs could be lying unconsciously inside the person's mind without people realizing it. Albert Ellis, a psychotherapist known for his rational emotive behavior therapy (REBT), assumed that the term irrational refers to a euphemism for unhelpful, illogical, and inconsistent with reality. These beliefs are the opposite of rational beliefs. In general terms, rational beliefs refer to beliefs that are logical, have empirical support, and are adaptive, healthy, and functional.

Ellis discusses that the cause of irrational beliefs is anxiety, fear, and emotional distress. The negative feelings could come from bad experiences such as childhood experiences. People's early childhood was so powerful and deeply rooted inside people's unconscious minds.

David & Ellis believes that our social and cultural environment is the source of both our rational and irrational beliefs. A person who is exposed to an environment rich in irrational beliefs will likely develop irrational beliefs, whereas a person who is exposed to an environment rich in rational beliefs would mostly develop reasonable opinions. According to this approach, our rationality and irrationality are mostly determined by our education, learning history, social and cultural environment.

The process of Irrational Beliefs is explained by Ellis in his theory called ABC(DE) theory. According to Ellis, based on his "ABC(DE)" model, people often experience undesirable events (A) that lead them to have rational and irrational beliefs cognition (B). These beliefs then lead to emotional, behavioral, and cognitive consequences. (C) Rational belief (RB) leads people to live a healthy and adaptive life and its consequences. Meanwhile, irrational beliefs (IB) lead people to an unhealthy and maladaptive life and consequence. As soon as the beliefs were generated, these consequences (C) could become activating events that trigger the events that produce secondary (meta) consequences through secondary (meta-cognitions) RBs (rational beliefs) and IBs (irrational beliefs).

In 1997 Aaron Beck and Ellis listed several irrational or dysfunctional beliefs that most people often have. Their irrational beliefs are started to disturb them in several ways, such as overgeneralizing, catastrophizing or awfulizing things, personalizing, and jumping to a conclusion. To conclude, Beck and Ellis also divide irrational beliefs into four main types:

1. Demands: feature phrases such as must, absolute should, have to, need and ought. These irrational beliefs consist of one or more absolutistic musts. Demands that they should perform well, demands that others must treat them nicely and demands that living condition must be free of hassles and life should be fair are three types of demands that often create a problem for an individual. (Ellis, 2009: 79).

2. Awfulizing: Thought that everything that happened to us is all 'bad things.'
3. Low frustration tolerance (LFT): think that a struggle is truly unbearable or cannot be stood.
4. Conditional self-acceptance: this is where we define self-based on one aspect.

Some of these irrational beliefs may have resulted in some consequences for behavior or action. For instance, the irrational belief type of demand results in several outcomes, such as:

1. Feeling sadness, depression, and anger when they failed to fulfill their demand.
2. The need for comfort, justice, and approval.
3. The decrease in anger control and the increase in demand, relationship problems, and behavioral consequences.
4. Aggressive-dominant relationship style. Theoretically, the tendency to be rigid and dominant has been connected to the demand for absolute control and is associated with an aggressive-dominant relationship style.
5. Holding absolute ideas about how other people behave toward one another.
6. The relational and marital problems such as couple disturbances and couple dissatisfaction.

Furthermore, Ellis as a psychologist practitioner explained that one of the way to overcomes irrational beliefs is through mindfulness and acceptance. He

discovered REBT or Rational Emotive Behaviour Therapy which is an action oriented approach focuses with helping individual to overcome irrational beliefs and learn how to manage their emotion, emotional distress, fear, and also anxiety. The main purpose of REBT is to help people recognize and challenge their beliefs to rational one so they could continue to live happily.

Acceptance and mindfulness is essential in rational-emotive behaviour therapy (REBT), although it is assumed that acceptance and change occur together. In acceptance based approaches, the detailed content or frequency of an individual's thoughts is irrelevant. Acceptance-based techniques centred on self-acceptance and acceptance of others, defined as a favourable attitude toward oneself and others, respectively.

It focused in (a) understand the value of being exposed to what is feared, (b) increase awareness of subjective experiences, and (c) promote unconditional acceptance of ideas, feelings, and actions—acceptance that does not prohibit choice, preferences, goals, or genuine efforts to create positive changes (David, et al. 2009: 221). When people choose to adopting a non-judgemental acceptance will cause them to be willing to experience whatever events occurs regardless of its emotional valence.

Ellis also discusses some self-help purposes that could be done to be affectively used, such as:

- a) choosing healthy consequences (C) instead of unhealthy one when facing adversities (A) and difficulties during the process to achieve life goals and purpose.
- b) When an individual already making their choice, their choice would mostly affect by their belief (B) and feeling at phase B.  
Individual could decide to feel healthily sorry, regretful and frustrated instead of become unhealthily anxious, depressed and stressed when facing a life's failure.
- c) Their decision at (B) could influence them to prefer healthily desire that their adversities (A) could be decrease instead of thinking unhealthily demand that their adversities should be decrease.
- d) For individuals who thinks that adversities must not exists, train their mind to accept failure and disapproval unconditionally to make themselves become less angry and disappoint when the failure happened.
- e) When an individual feels (C) anxious, depressed and angry when facing adversities (A) they could try to constructively recognize that they would always have the therapeutic choice of returning to healthy preferences again.



## **2.2. Research Methods**

### **2.2.1. Data and Data Source**

Primary data is the data collected by the writer from the main source to analyze the study by observing or interviewing, and secondary data is the data collected from other studies or works by other researchers from another institution (Situmorang et al. 2014: 3).

The primary data for this thesis is taken from *Burmese Days*, a novel by George Orwell published in 1934. The secondary data for this thesis is taken from journal articles, theses, and books regarding *Burmese Day* and irrational beliefs theory.

### **2.2.2. Method of Collecting Data**

The writer used a library research method to collect the data. Library research is a method of collecting data from literary works such as notes, books, thesis, and research papers (Hasan, 2022: 22).

Several steps are done by the writer to collect the data for this thesis. First, the writer reads *Burmese Days* several times in order to get a close and detailed view of the character of Elizabeth Lackersteen. Second, the writer reads several articles, journals, and theses about *Burmese Days*, an irrational belief theory by Albert Ellis, for more detailed information regarding this research. Third, the writer analyses the character of Elizabeth Lackersteen in *Burmese Days* using the theory by Albert Ellis using qualitative and contextual methods.

### **2.2.3. Method of Analyzing Data**

In analyzing the data, the writer used the qualitative method and contextual analysis. The qualitative method is a method that focuses on the interpretation of occurrences in their natural environments in order to create sense in terms of human meaning (Denzin et al. 1994: 43). In this thesis, the qualitative method is used by the writer to evaluate and describe personality changes and the character development.

A contextual analysis is an examination of a text that evaluates a text not only in terms of it, but also in terms of its textuality and the traits that distinguish the work as a text (Behrendt, 2008:1). Both qualitative and contextual analysis is used by the writer since it allows the writer to conduct a further and deeper analysis of the study.

## **CHAPTER III**

### **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

#### **3.1. Intrinsic Aspects**

##### **3.1.1. Character and Characterization**

###### **3.1.1.1. Elizabeth Lackersteen**

Elizabeth Lackersteen is the main female character in the story. She is the niece of Mr. and Mrs. Lackersteen. Her remark personality is she is a materialistic young woman who believes that she belongs to the upper social class. From direct characterization, Orwell described her appearance as a twenty-two years old pretty young woman with blue eyes, fair smooth skin, and short blonde hair (Orwell, 1934:71).

Elizabeth's personality is described by Orwell mostly using direct characterization. Orwell described Elizabeth through direct characterization that Elizabeth loves luxury and used to grow up and be raised in a rich family.

She loved the dancing on deck at nights, the cocktails which every man on board seemed anxious to buy for her, the deck games, of which, however, she grew tired at about the same time as the other members of the younger set. It was nothing to her that her mother's death was only two months past. She had never cared greatly for her mother, and besides, the people here knew nothing of her affairs. It was so lovely after those two graceless years to breathe the air of wealth again (Orwell, 1934:81).

From the passage, it is acknowledgeable that Elizabeth loves luxury. In the novel, it was described that Elizabeth loves shooting, and she dreamt of tiger

shooting which she considered an incredible and thrilling thing. She also loves riding polo. She loves its exclusiveness about it. She dreamt of having her own horses, polo grounds, and parched backyards.

Elizabeth also loves to admire luxurious things. She spends her days in Paris thinking about the luxurious life she could achieve. She likes to visit the American library to admire the luxurious painting and their big shining porcelain table. She would consider all the things lovely and imagine herself living that kind of life (Orwell, 1934:79).

Elizabeth used to grow up and was raised in a rich family. However, her family's bankruptcy led the family to fall into poverty. She became an orphan year later, and then, she accepted the letter from her wealthy aunt and uncle, Mr. and Mrs. Lackersteen, to live with them in Kyauktada, Burma. In Europe, Elizabeth would be no different from any other poor, unmarried woman who was forced to find a job or suffer from hunger.

Besides her materialistic personality, Elizabeth is also a snob. She passes judgment on anything she sees into two categories: cheap and expensive. She hates interacting with anything she considers dirty, low, and cheap. Elizabeth also hates interacting with the locals. She hates how John Flory admires the local culture of Burma and how he becomes acquainted with the locals and the natives.

During her first encounter with John Flory in Kyauktada, Elizabeth sees a marriage opportunity. But as Elizabeth and Flory continue their relationship,

Elizabeth starts hesitating about Flory. It seems inappropriate for a white man like him to place such a high value on the natives. When a titled lieutenant with the name Verrall shows up in town, Elizabeth turns her attention to approaching him instead with the help of Mrs. Lackersteen. But Verrall never proposes, and he does not intend to marry anyone.

### **3.1.2 Conflict**

#### **3.1.2.1 Internal Conflict of Elizabeth Lackersteen's**

The internal conflict of this story related to the study is Elizabeth Lackersteen versus her irrational beliefs and her past experience. This internal conflict is considered Man versus Self. Elizabeth's irrational beliefs were caused by her past experience living in poverty when she was young. Elizabeth, who was born into a rich family and used to live a luxurious life, considers the experience as a bad experience that resulted in her fear of living in poverty again. When she arrived in Kyauktada, Burma, she conflicted desires to marry any man who was wealthy and could bring her back to her previous life of luxury were met with a reality that did not match up with her expectations.

#### **3.1.2.2. The External Conflict of Elizabeth Lackersteen's**

The external conflicts are the conflict between Elizabeth Lackersteen and John Flory regarding their personal relationship. These external conflicts are considered man versus man. Elizabeth, whose desire is to marry the rich man of her dream, somehow feels conflicted about her feelings towards John Flory. John Flory loves

her so much, but Flory's interest in the local culture and his friendship with the Indian doctor, Dr. Verashwami, and other locals somehow offend Elizabeth.

"What absolutely disgusting people!" She was bitterly angry. Her face had flushed a wonderful delicate pink, like a poppy bud opened a day too soon...." (Orwell, 1934: 113)

Elizabeth thinks that those people are disgusting and weird and that the British should not make interaction with them. After the accident at Li Yeik's home, Elizabeth stated that the people were *uncivilized* and *disgraceful*. Elizabeth starts to cut off her relationship with Flory once she finds out that Ma Hla May is Flory's mistress. She thought the affair was the most 'disgraceful' thing about Flory.

## **3.2. Extrinsic Aspects**

### **3.2.1 Elizabeth Lackersteen's Childhood Experience**

Elizabeth's childhood was spent in the lap of luxury, thanks to her wealthy father. Her father is a tea broker, and his fortune fluctuated greatly. Elizabeth's mother is a woman who is interested in art and literature. After several years of dedicating herself to Women's campaigns and the literary field, she came to a failure. Then Elizabeth's mother attempted to dedicate her life to art, where she became an artist. The reason why she's been taken up with painting is that painting is the only art that can be practiced without talent or hard work.

Their family used to reside in a massive old home in Highgate, complete with a garden, tennis courts, many greenhouses, shrubberies, and a personal butler for all of their needs. Her father would pay for her to attend a highly prestigious and

pricey boarding school for two terms at a time. Four of her friends in boarding school are from prestigious families and each of them has ponies of their own and they will go riding on Saturday afternoon.

It was the most joyful moment for Elizabeth. For several years, Elizabeth has been used to living with the rich. She described that she was able to "rub shoulders with the rich" (Orwell, 1934:76). Her whole lifestyle is what she called "Goodly" and "Lovely," which refers to all things luxurious, expensive, elegant, and aristocratic. The opposite of "Lovely" is what Elizabeth called "Beastly," which refers to all things dreadful, cheap, low, shabby, dirty, and laborious. She gives judgment between "Lovely" and "beastly" to everything she saw started from a pair of clothing, people's behavior, and even her surroundings.

However, Elizabeth's father's prosperity was not going to last for very long (Orwell, 1934: 76). In 1919, Elizabeth's family faced financial ruin, and she had to move to a "beastly" cheap school because her father could not afford her tuition at the boarding school anymore. Years later, her father passed away when Elizabeth's turned twenty due to influenza.

This is where Elizabeth began to experience poverty and misery. Her mother moved the two of them to Paris and made the decision to spend the rest of her life as an artist, and she and her family made their home in a studio in the Montparnasse neighborhood.

She was so foolish with money that her income would not come near covering expenses, and for several months Elizabeth did not even have enough to eat. Then she found a job as visiting teacher of English to the family of a French bank manager (Orwell, 1934:77).

Her mother was an unemployed artist, and didn't gain any money from her painting. She considers herself a part of the Bohemian, and as a result, both Elizabeth and her mother are unable to afford any money. Elizabeth doesn't like her home, as she describes it as "evil" and "satanic," where the house is very dirty and messy (Orwell, 1934:78).

Therefore, Elizabeth decided to work as a tutor for a French Bank Manager who unexpectedly is a pervert old man. Upon experiencing dreadful sexual harassment from the man who hired her to teach his son, Elizabeth could not take it anymore, and she quit the job. Her existence in Paris is the worst moment in her life or what Elizabeth described as "very beastly."

The feeling where she believes that she belongs to the rich diffused itself through all her thoughts. Because of this, Elizabeth had no friends in Paris. She acts bitter towards the foreigner, especially the men, with Elizabeth considering their cheap-looking clothes and horrible table manner.

### **3.2.2. Elizabeth Lackersteen's Irrational Beliefs**

Referring to the theory by Ellis, Elizabeth Lackersteen's irrational beliefs type is 'demand.' These demands are characterized by a dogmatic insistence or thoughts that a certain condition must exist. As for Elizabeth, her irrational beliefs consist



of one absolutistic must, which is "I must marry a rich man." As Mrs. Lackersteen states that a woman should make herself become 'expensive' for a man.

Mrs. Lackersteen began with some general remarks, apropos of a photograph in the Tatler, about these fast modern girls who went about in beach pyjamas and all that and made themselves so dreadfully cheap with men. A girl, Mrs Lackersteen said, should never make herself too cheap with a man; she should make herself — but the opposite of "cheap" seemed to be "expensive", and that did not sound at all right, so Mrs. Lackersteen changed her tack (Orwell, 1934: 201).

The comment made by Mrs. Lackersteen that a beautiful young woman like Elizabeth should have married a wealthy, expensive man rather than a poor man is subconsciously present in Elizabeth's thoughts and beliefs.

Referring to the ABC(DE) model by Ellis, Elizabeth's irrational beliefs about demand are caused by her bad experience of poverty, which she considered a negative one when living in Paris, resulting in fear of experiencing poverty and miserable life again. Her fear then leads her to have irrational beliefs and cognition where she insists on getting married to a rich man (B). Her beliefs are affecting her social life, especially since it keeps her from developing romantic relationship with all the men she meets (C). Because her cognition is characterized by irrational beliefs (E) rather than rational beliefs (D), she has some unhealthy life consequences of behaviors and feelings, such as seeking social approval, a need for justice and comfort, and a tendency to be dominant in relationships. When Elizabeth fails to fulfill her demand, she feels sad and depressed.

Elizabeth's belief is considered irrational because her desire keeps her growing emotionally. She could not get closer to any man and was unable to make any friends. When she gets close to John Flory, her irrational belief keep her from accepting Flory's feelings.

Ellis also discusses how an individual's environment and background affect irrational beliefs. In this case, Elizabeth's family background, where she comes from a wealthy family, influences her thoughts, making her believe that she belongs to the rich.

The British patriarchal environment she lived in supports her irrational beliefs that it's important for a white woman like her to marry a white man for prestige, pride, and wealth. Mrs. Lackersteen told Elizabeth that if she failed to marry a wealthy man, she would be trapped in a filthy kitchen filled with black beetles. In this case, black beetles symbolize poverty (Orwell, 1934: 201).

### **3.2.3 The Relation of Elizabeth's Childhood Experience to Her Irrational Beliefs**

Referring to the ABC(DE) model by Ellis, Elizabeth's childhood experience when living in poverty in Paris caused her irrational beliefs. Elizabeth's awful experience of living in poverty in Paris is the one that traumatized her the most. Due to her past experience, adult Elizabeth decided that she "had to" marry a rich man in order to not experience the poverty she had in the past again.

Elizabeth's happiest times were spent during the prosperous period of her family's history, and those times have become her most treasured memories. The happy times were when she joined the boarding school, made friends with the rich, and lived in luxury, even if it was only for a short time until it came to a point where Elizabeth felt that she "belonged" to the rich. Even though it was only for a short time, the happy times made Elizabeth feel as though she "belonged" to the upper class. According to Orwell, the feeling infused unconsciously into Elizabeth's thoughts and established itself as she grew older (Orwell, 1934:76).

Elizabeth's awful experience of living in poverty in Paris changes the way she reacts to life. In this phase of her life, her irrational beliefs are starting to manifest. Her hatred of 'cheap' items is growing stronger than ever, to the point where it is affecting her social life where she is unable to make new friends or find a partner.

Considering the case of Elizabeth, who has an IB schema. "I must get married to a rich man" (demandingness) might affect Elizabeth's daily life and relationship. Elizabeth's demandingness came with some consequences behavior-wise. It is believed that demandingness is the fundamental irrational belief from which all other irrational beliefs originate. Some reviews of the research and literature show how they are also linked to several types of bad behavior in both adults and children. According to Ellis, in several consequences of demandingness, adult Elizabeth's consequences from her irrational beliefs have resulted in a demand that life should be fair and free of hassles, where Elizabeth demands a stable and better living condition.

Elizabeth's need for a marriage to seek comfort, justice, and social approval is the result of her demandingness and its consequences. Elizabeth's environment believes that a young woman for Elizabeth, single and had not belonged to any man, is considered shameful. Marriage also helps Elizabeth to achieve better living conditions. Without a marriage, Elizabeth would be treated with disrespect by others. During that time, a young, unmarried, unattached lady would become a man's sexual object. In the book, it is described that European males, such as Ellis and Mr. Lackersteen, love making sexual jokes about Elizabeth.

The second one is the increase in demands, relationship problems, and behavioral expressions that are seen in Elizabeth's relationship with John Flory. As Elizabeth's need for marriage increased, her relationship with John Flory became worse. When Ma Hla May exposed to the public that she was Flory's mistress, Elizabeth hid the relationship between her and Flory.

The third one is the aggressive-dominant relationship, which is the behavioral consequences of demandingness that are also seen in Elizabeth's relationship with John Flory. Elizabeth is the one who tries to dictate her relationship with John Flory. She has full control of the relationship, and Flory is considered the weaker one in their relationship.

The fourth point is that Elizabeth has absolute ideas about how other people should behave toward one another or how they should treat one another. These ideas could result in two problems. REBT divides the problem into two, which are couple dissatisfaction and couple disturbance. Elizabeth's high expectations of

Flory were that he would behave himself in the manner of a proper Englishman, yet Flory's actions and behavior were exactly the opposite of what Elizabeth had anticipated from him. Elizabeth feels more vulnerable in situations that defeat her expectations. These ideas then affected her relationship with Flory, which resulted in couple disturbances caused by unrealistic expectations toward her partner.

In *Burmese Days*, Elizabeth tries to accept that her ambition to marry a rich guy and live a comfortable and luxurious life is almost impossible to achieve in the situation where there are only four British men left in Kyauktada right after Verrall left Kyauktada and John Flory's death.

Months passed, and the rains reached their climax, and Elizabeth had just made up her mind that she must go home after all, penniless and unmarried, when — Mr Macgregor proposed to her. He had had it in his mind for a long time; indeed, he had only been waiting for a decent interval to elapse after Flory's death. Elizabeth accepted him gladly. He was rather old, perhaps, but a Deputy Commissioner is not to be despised — certainly he was a far better match than Flory. They are very happy. Mr Macgregor was always a good-hearted man, but he has grown more human and likeable since his marriage (Orwell, 1934: 255).

The passage shows Elizabeth's started to recognize the situation she is in, and she accepts the reality where she continues to lead her life. Referring to the REBT theory, Elizabeth has applied acceptance to her reality. Ellis believes that acceptance is the key point in rational emotive behavior therapy. Elizabeth's realization of her reality has decreased her cognition of irrational beliefs, and therefore she tries to challenge her irrational beliefs into rational ones by acknowledging the reality and situation of life she was in. Elizabeth also has done

self-help purposes where she chooses healthy consequences instead the unhealthy ones.

In the application of mindfulness-based practice, Elizabeth manages to recognize the importance of exposure to what she's feared. She realized that in the situation she was in, it was impossible to meet her demand for a luxurious life. Elizabeth then manages to heighten the awareness of her fear of being in poverty again by expecting a stable marriage from a man. Lastly, she promotes the acceptance of her thoughts and demands and makes sincere efforts to make changes for a better life.

## **CHAPTER IV**

### **CONCLUSION**

This study's analysis is separated into two categories: intrinsic and extrinsic. The intrinsic aspects focus on the story's characters and conflict, while the extrinsic aspects analyze Elizabeth's irrational beliefs. Elizabeth Lackersteen's irrational belief type is demand, where her demandingness comes with several consequences in behavior and feelings.

The process of Elizabeth Lackersteen's irrational beliefs started from her fear of experiencing poverty and miserable life again. This is the cause of her irrational beliefs. Her fear then resulted in her cognition of the experiences and negative experiences. Her cognition leads her to have an irrational belief type of demand where Elizabeth demands a stable and better living condition through a marriage. She insists on marrying a rich and wealthy person to be able to live in luxury again. Her past experiences cause her to have irrational beliefs in the form of "demands," in which she insists on marrying a wealthy man and living in luxury.

Her irrational beliefs manifest in several consequences of her behavior, such as stress, dominant-aggressive behavior seen in her dominant relationship with John Flory, high expectations toward others seen in Elizabeth's expectation towards Flory, relationship problems, and the need for justice, comfort, and social approval seen in Elizabeth's need for a marriage.

In order to overcome her irrational beliefs, Elizabeth goes through an "acceptance" phase where she finally accepts the reality she's in and changes her irrational beliefs to rational ones. She lowered her expectations of her partner and acknowledged the situation she was in. Elizabeth also changed her preference where she preferred to choose the healthy consequences instead of the unhealthy ones.

Through the analysis of this study, it is possible to conclude that childhood experiences are one of the sources of many people's irrational beliefs and that acceptance is one approach to questioning these beliefs and replacing them with rational ones.

More research is needed to conduct a deeper analysis of the study regarding irrational beliefs experienced by fictional characters in literary works. Lastly, the writer hopes this paper will be beneficial for upcoming research concerning the topic of *Burmese Days* and irrational beliefs.



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