

## THE MAIN CHARACTER'S SELF-ACTUALIZATION USING MASLOW'S HIERARCHY OF NEEDS IN *THE COLOR PURPLE* BY ALICE WALKER

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### Abstract

A. Maslow introduces the five-stage hierarchy Model in his book *Motivation and Personality* (1954), which emphasizes the satisfaction of needs to achieve the higher self. This research analyzes a novel made by Alice Walker entitled *The Color Purple* and it leads on one main characters, Celie. This study was done on purpose to help analyzing how Celie gives her needs hierarchy. The writer used the theory of Maslow of needs which is the needs hierarchy. It is categorized into five which are physiological, love, safety, and belongingness, self-esteem, and also needs of self-actualization. Based on analysis, the evolution of the personality character has been developed in every level, showing equal attentive to fresh visions into her relationships and conduct to others. The writer also applies close reading, and contextual method on purpose to help supporting the analysis. The outcomes indicate that Celie is able to fulfill her needs hierarchy.

**Keywords/Kata Kunci:** *hierarchy of needs, personality, self-actualization needs*

### INTRODUCTION

Human beings are not able to avoid the things they need. There are many types of needs which should be given and fulfilled. Regarding of human needs, Abraham Maslow stated a human motivation theory said that all humans' basic needs should be individually met. The scale of sequential needs based on the theory described as psychological needs, safety needs, love, belongingness, esteem and also self-actualization needs. Needs lower bottom in the level of hierarchy should become categorized before individuals are able to meet the higher up needs.

In his book, "*Motivation and Personality*" (1954), this motivation should begin from the bottom. First it comes from physiological and biological sides, then security, then belonging and love, and the fourth level is to esteem needs, respectively. He emphasized that usually people adhere to Maslow's theory order for need satisfaction. However, the following needs may arise in degrees before the lower needs are fully satisfied. Also, the lower need may arise later and has no anticipated aspect of the need being apparent obviously. He also said that a healthy person is known as a condition where a person is able to make actualize themselves well, they are able to take care of the needs to help fulfilling their potential and also know or understand the world and things around them.

The human needs hierarchy is claimed as the needs which should be given by human, not just showing from real life but also kind of literary works characters as like novels. A novel can be one of the literary outcomes by writing and is regarded to literature stories about actions as narrative. Provide many life examples that justify the acts and response of characters that may become confusing or nonsensical. A literary work can be known as activity that applied deep feelings, creativity, and inspiration (Endraswara, p. 96). The literature psychology is going to reflect some psychological side or aspects of a character in prose, drama, or even property. Therefore, literary psychology can be known as study that looks at the source of literature on psychological abuse (Endraswara, p. 97). The primary data used in this study is the novel *The Color Purple* by Alice Walker. This novel is one of the famous and controversial novels which explain the way on purpose to give the hierarchy of needs under oppression in life. *The Color Purple* is a narrative novel by Alice Walker, an American author. This book was first published in 1982, in 1983, won the achievement of Pulitzer Prize for

fiction category, helping Walker the first African-American Woman to be the winner, as well as the Award of National Book. *The Color Purple* narrates about the girl named Celie, who is the main character described as a young woman with black skin in African-American society in the early 20th century. Celie struggles for justice by apply a hierarchy of needs in deal with her life. It is shown in Celie's life which is gloomy because get the bad treatment by her father, making her think very weak. In this novel, Celie's character is really striking in her behavior and her personality. Then, as she grew older, she found friends who made Celie rise again and become more independent and stronger to achieve justice and fulfill her life's needs. However, she lives her life happily and enjoys it. The objectives of this research are to analyze how Celie fulfills her needs in *The Color Purple* viewed from Abraham Harold Maslow's theory and how Celie's self-actualization in *The Color Purple* affect herself and the society around her.

The theory used in this research is Maslow Need Theory. This theory explains about the encouragement shown of people in order to help giving their hierarchical needs and reveal the real character that they have. The purpose of using the theory is to analyze character of Celie deeper. It is also hoped that by having a deeper analysis about the character of how to achieve the highest needs is self-actualization, the researcher could give answer to the research problems. Maslow shares 5 needs desired by humans: Psychological Needs, Safety Needs, , Love and Belonging Needs, Self-Esteem Needs, and Self-Actualization Needs. Physiological needs can be known as the needs which normally come from the bottom of needs hierarchy. It can be said as physiological drives. The most basic needs set which are: eating, breathing, drinking, and excretion. In theory of Maslow, these basic needs dominate the organism and should be firstly met (Maslow, p. 71).

When the physiological needs are already met, there are new needs coming in. It is called as safety needs. These needs are used as security for life. Humans need at the time they are in danger condition. They commonly others to come help. Safety needs take great role especially for infants and children. Based on theory of Maslow, at the time physiological needs are fulfilled, it comes a new need of safety emerges that becomes primary encouragement of actions. financial security, Physical safety, protection from getting harm, and containing adequate materials on purpose to help sustaining survival are claimed to become needs of safety within the framework. Safety needs take human yearning, in which unexpected things become rarer. Human will find out consistency and choose familiarity to novelty; there comes a normal fear of the unknown and also preference for the known, which based on basic needs of human for safety and also predictability. At the time when the previous needs are fulfilled and satisfied, it is going to come the needs of love, affection and also belongingness. humans can have feeling o loneliness due to the lack of having friends, lover, a wife, or even children (Maslow, p. 26).

Abraham Maslow stated that needs of love and belonging can be meant as wish for a mate or children, friendship, having a family, a club, group and others, "love and belongingness needs, such as the desire for friendship; the wish for a mate and children; the need to belong to a family, a club, a neighborhood" (Maslow, p. 279). When the physiological, safety, and love needs are somewhat satisfied, a set of needs relating to esteem and self-respect emerge as primary determinants of human behavior. The esteem needs include the desire for a high and accurate estimation of the self as well as the need for others to appraise the individual as worthy. Esteem of others is differentiated from love or social relationships in Maslow's theory. In this model, the opinions of others about oneself are considered to be a higher level of human need than simple human contact. Maslow specifically notes that self-esteem can be broken into two types: esteem which is based on respect and acknowledgment from others, and esteem which is based on your own self-assessment. Self-confidence and independence stem from this latter type of self-esteem. Self-actualization is the highest need in Maslow's theory. Even though all of those needs above have been satisfied, humans still think that there will be dissatisfaction and restlessness which these will come, unless humans do what they want and fit for them. For example, what a man can be, he must be. For example, a poet must write a poem, an artist must paint, and so on (Maslow, p. 29). Moreover, Boeree (2006) states that self-actualization is someone's potential turns into actualities, "self-actualization means to turn potentials in to actualities" (p. 8).

People involve the desire to fulfill potentials to be a person that you can be. The four needs required to achieve Self-Actualization that stand lower in the Maslow's hierarchy are psychological needs, safety needs, belonging needs, and esteem needs. Those are basic survival are the first priority, and the highest potential follow on when other needs have

been met. The theory of character is used as the methods to analyze the character of Celie. Since the focus of the study is self-actualization's Celie, the use of Maslow theory will help the writer to reveal the Celie's struggle to achieve high needs is self-actualization. This theory will help the writer to see the Celie's process evolved for the better and managed to live a successful life. This will be used to support the self-actualization. The relation between human needs and character is also included in this chapter to explain how human needs will push toward a character in the novel. This will help the writer in doing analysis of the character in literary work. These types of needs will be used to find out how to achieve the highest needs that can be achieved by Celie who creates a self-actualization in her life.

## METHODOLOGY

The data are collected through the comprehensive reading of the novel, highlighting, classifying the words, sentences, and dialogues in the novel related to human needs, and analyzing them by Maslow's theory on the hierarchy of human needs. In addition, this study also used qualitative research. The qualitative method is considered relevant to the present research since it involved data collection for describing the existence of the main character. The researcher intends to describe the data obtained, as they were found in the novel.

The research of this study is a qualitative method. Qualitative method is research and understanding of processes based on the methodology of studying social phenomena and human problems (Creswell, p. 195). Qualitative methods are emphasized with meaning and value and used to know hidden meanings, to develop theories, and understand social interactions and human psychology. In this research, the researcher used Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory to analyze the main character, as described in Alice Walker's in *The Color Purple* novel. There are several processes that are conducted in qualitative data analysis such as gathering data, making interpretations, and writing reports or the results (Creswell, p. 151). In collecting data, the researcher collects qualitative data involving data from primary sources and secondary sources by conducting data collection methods and procedures. After that, the researcher makes the interpretation based on what the researcher observed, the analysis of the novel and textbook with close reading, the perspective of the psychoanalytic lens, and the application of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs theory and approach. After collecting data and making interpretations, the researcher will draw conclusions from the results of the research analysis.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Celie's Needs According to Maslow Hierarchy of Needs

Celie is a young girl who has a disadvantaged life, and was born into poverty and loneliness. Celie also does not go to school, so she was illiterate due to a lack of education. She has no mother because she died, and lives with her stepfather, along with Celie's sister, and Celie's children. Celie is a victim of rape by her own father and has been pregnant twice. This makes her life filled with insults, injustice, and a lack of affection. However, she still struggles through life until she achieves glory in her life through stages of the hierarchy of needs.

#### 1. Celie's Physiological Needs

Based on Maslow's view (in Feist, Feist, and Roberts, p. 271), Physiological Needs are the basic needs of all needs on Maslow's theory of needs. Those needs are the needs for oxygen, water, food, sleep, and sex. In this novel, Celie's physiological needs improve gradually. It can be seen on how Shug treats Celie sweetly "*Shug cook, talk, clean the house, talk, fix up the tree, talk, wake up in the morning, talk.*" (Walker, p. 42).

#### 2. Celie's Safety Needs

After the physiological needs satisfied, the second need will emerge. It is safety needs. These needs include physical security, stability, dependability, protection, and freedom from threatening forces (Maslow in Feist, Feist, and Roberts, p. 272). The safety need appears specially for protection, or someone who can give security. Celis experiences lack of safety, Celie's husband has never become a defender and protector for her. This unsympathetic behavior of the

husband has evolved into deep seclusion. Though in the hierarchy, safety level appears next to the physiological supplies, Celie has never received the physical and mental endorsement, neither from her parents also from her husband. Her protection was being threatened always. Her husband would beat her brutally and inhumanely. However, she has chosen to remain quiet. She works but never argues. Her voiceless dumb persona proves her futile to others. Celie has always perceived Shug, a woman like herself, as "the most beautiful, stronger person." Eventually, Celie and Shug sensed each other's security needs when they were together. She has been digging into Mr. Albert's violent behavior. Celie's response approves of his need for protection, *"Oh, Miss Shug, ... I won't leave you, until I know Albert won't think of hitting you"* (Walker, p. 72).

### 3. Celie's Love and Belonging Needs

After the physiological needs and safety needs are gratified, it comes Love and Belongingness Needs. Love and belonging need means the wish for friendship, a mate and children, the need to belong in a family, a club, and so on, "love and belongingness needs, such as the desire for friendship; the wish for a mate and children; the need to belong to a family, a club, a neighborhood" (Maslow, p. 279).

As a human being, Celie needs a friend. In the novel, Celie deeply craves for love and affection. Shug enters and works for Celie's safety needs. Simultaneously, she commences to fostering love and belonging needs. Shug has been Celie's first love. She is fond listening, thinking, and imagining Shug. Her first encounter has fallen her with cherish, *"I feel like once I see her eyes, my feet can let go the spot where they stuck"* (Walker, p. 44). Shug's disposition brings all her lost relations. She reminisces, *"I work on her like a doll or like she Olivia or like her mama"* (Walker, p. 51). Her craving for love surrounds these few people. Metaphorically, Mom, Olivia, and the doll represent her detached belongings. She lost her doll (her childhood), her children, and mother's love. She recollects memories to mitigate her torn sentiments. Celie disgusts Men. She feels repulsion for all the men she has encountered in her life. Her feelings are centered on women only; Mom, Nettie, Olivia, and Shug Avery.

### 4. Celie's Self-Esteem Needs

After the previous needs are fulfilled, Esteem Need will emerge. Esteem needs are the needs of human's real ability, self-respect or self-esteem. Human beings also need the desire for strength, achievement, and confidence to face the problems. When she receives the prestigious acknowledgment, Celie's disintegrated personality has started to become whole again and she relies on Shug, *"He beat me when you were not here"* (Walker, p. 71). Further, Shug compliments Celie for being a "Virgin" (a sense of "dignity" for a girl). That she has considered of being deprived and thought of Nettie as having virginity, *"I know she be big... But me never again"* (Walker, p. 17). However, she regains her self-confidence. Incessantly, Shug has contributed and endeavored hard to accomplish her esteem needs. *"if you were my wife, I'd cover you up with kisses stead of licks and work hard for you"* (Walker, p. 101). Maslow elaborates, "satisfaction of the self-esteem needs leads to a feeling of self-confidence, worth strength, capability, and adequacy of being useful and necessary in the world" (Maslow, p. 45). If someone sticks to meet this need, the result will produce inferiority, drawbacks, and meaninglessness to the victim. Celie and Shug to brings in the value of individuality by showing the power of existence.

### 5. Celie's Self-Actualization

Self-actualization is the highest need in Maslow's hierarchy of needs. Maslow (Feist, Feist, and Roberts, p. 274), states that the need for self-actualization includes self-fulfillment, being aware of all self-potential, and the desire to be as creative as possible. The tendency might be expressed as the desire to prove what she can be and what she must be. As Celie experiences several needs in her life. However, she can achieve a high level of need is self-actualization. Celie experienced changes after successfully achieving self-actualization. Celie can actualize herself. She reaches her dreams by passing the process step by step. She get a job that she loves, sewing, *"I start to make pants for Jack. They have to be camel. And soft and strong. And they have to have big pockets so he can keep a lot of children's things. Marbles and string and pennies and rocks."* (Walker, p. 85). She realizes that she has to change her life better. Celie is transforming from a cataphor to a butterfly and she breaks the long-imposed silence on her personality.

## **Celie's Self-Actualization Affect Herself and the Society around Her**

### **1. Celie's Considering Problems as Challenges**

Celie peacefully contemplates and finds solutions during complications. She often visualizes her children coming home. She hesitates for telling them their embarrassing birth truth, *"I feel shame, more than love, to tell the truth"* (Walker, p. 33). Later she gathers herself *"anyway, as they alright here"* (Walker, p. 133). She has prepared to face the situation with a plan of adjustment as well. Once Celie wrote to Nettie and shared her experiences of visiting "pa". *"For the first time in my life, I wanted to see Pa. She has found out the truth about 'Pa' not being her real father"* (Walker, p. 173). She stated Nettie, *"I don't write to God no more, I write to you"* (Walker, p. 173). Celie chose to take all her decisions individually. Be careful of real conditions and also able to objectively judge people and conditions had become such a good trait of personality of Celie.

### **2. Celie's Becoming Organized and Creative**

Celie reveals herself to become such a creative mind woman. In Memphis, she asked, *"how to make living?"* (Walker, p. 192) But she has been working for "pants also making". she firstly said yes that she did not know any idea of pant making, *"I did not know what I was starting"* (Walker, p. 191). Apparently, she made a pretty paints pair. Then she defines her own things. Celie also claimed her to become such a talented, innovative, and also organized woman. Before coming to her top decisions and experiences, Celie gets her joys with Nettie, *"I am so happy, I got love, I got work, I got money, friends and time"* (Walker, p. 191). "Not all self-actualizers are talented or creative in the arts, but all are creative in their own way" (Feist, p. 293).

### **3. Celie's Focusing on the Problems**

Self-actualizing is usually focused on problems outside themselves or the problem itself and not their egos. They became aware of a task they should do in life, and they carry out all of their energy (Maslow in Schultz, pp. 102-103). Celie was known to become more aware of the tasks. It is shown when she was determined to fight the man's family in order to save her sister. Celie puts all his energy to revenge to step-father.

*"She say, All my life I had to fight. I had to fight my daddy. I had to safe my sister. A girl child ain't safe in a family of men. But I never thought I'd have to fight in my own house. She let out her breath."* (Walker, p. 15).

### **4. Celie's Accepting Others as They Are, Not Trying to Change People**

At first, Celie has depressed over Shug's relationship with her new lover that is still nineteen-year-old called "Germain". She can often feel her absence. Since she had been realizing her characteristics of self-actualizing, she tends to receive Shug's freedom and told her she needs for space. "They can accept themselves and their various characteristics with little feeling of guilt or anxiety and, at the same time, can ready accept others" (Zimbardo, p. 488). *"Shug got a right over the world in whatever the company she chooses. Just because I love her don't take away none of her rights"* (Walker, p. 244). Moreover, *"who am I to tell her to love"* (Walker, p. 244). Her personality of self-actualized had been showing by her decision of accepting Shug with her truth. Celie never gets to be imposed in anything toward Shug. Instead, she tends to value her actions and decisions.

### **5. Celie's High Social Awareness or Interest**

Person that has self-actualizing had already been filled with empathy, compassion, and desire to help people and nature. It is going to emerge some social awareness and belonging sense to be helpful for others (Maslow in Schultz, p. 107). Celie has a great sense of empathy. It can be seen when Celie tried to protect and calm Grady so that she can escape from Mamphis, and considers Grady his equal instead of her maid (Walker, p. 84). Beside that, Celie's interest is in helping people around her to get a proper education. She is not ashamed that he did not receive a proper education in the past life. *"She is sitting there shelling peas or helping the children with their spelling. Helping others with spelling and everything else she thinks to need to know."* (Walker, p. 93)

## 6. Celie's Being Democratic

People with high self-actualization never underestimate people with less intelligence or capabilities than them. These people are having great desire to learn (Maslow in Schultz, pp. 108-109). This character also can be shown in Celie. She never looked down on others certainly even people of Africans and she is ready to learn the rise of these Africans.

*"So proper. You really couldn't imagine them actually building? with their own hands? A school in the bush. Or battling reptiles. Or unfriendly Africans who thought, since they were wearing dresses with things that looked like wings behind, they should be able to fly"*(Walker, p. 95)

## CONCLUSION

According to the results and also discussion mentioned, it is able to be stated that: Firstly, Celie has fulfilled the steps of Maslow's Needs, started from psychological needs, safety needs, love and belonging needs, self-esteem needs, and finally self-actualization needs. The fulfillment of needs to reach the top one has affected herself and the society around her. Celie became a person who taking problems in terms of challenges, be organizing and creative, spontaneous and natural, comfortable with oneself, accepting others as they are, and enjoying other's culture. Celie reaches her dream to get work and open her business. She is able to actualize herself by changing life into her better version. She also uses her creative idea and tried to make pants. It is meant that she is able to fulfill her needs of self-actualization. After analyzing this novel, it can be stated that Celie has ability to fulfill her entire needs of hierarchy with struggling and living her better life.

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