

**POSITIVE SELF-CONCEPT IN LIZ MURRAY'S  
*BREAKING NIGHT* (2010):  
A HUMANISTIC PSYCHOLOGICAL APPROACH**



**PUBLICATION ARTICLES**

by:

**Bryan Yusuf Dyactowo**  
A 320 100 207

**SCHOOL OF TEACHER TRAINING AND EDUCATION  
MUHAMMADIYAH UNIVERSITY OF SURAKARTA**

**2014**



**UNIVERSITAS MUHAMMADIYAH SURAKARTA**  
**FAKULTAS KEGURUAN DAN ILMU PENDIDIKAN**

Jl. A. Yani Tromol Pos I Pabelan Kartasura Tlp. (0271) 717417, 719483, Fax. (0271) Surakarta 57102

**SURAT PERSETUJUAN ARTIKEL PUBLIKASI ILMIAH**

Yang bertanda tangan dibawah ini pembimbing skripsi/tugas akhir :

Nama : Drs.M. Thoyibi,M.S.  
NIK/NIP : 410  
Nama : Titis Setyabudi, S.S M. Hum  
NIK/NIP : 948

Telah membaca dan mencermati naskah artikel publikasi ilmiah, yang merupakan ringkasan skripsi(tugas akhir) dari mahasiswa :

Nama : Bryan Yusuf Dyactowo  
NIM : A320100207  
Program Studi : Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris  
Judul Skripsi : POSITIVE SELF-CONCEPT IN LIZ MURRAY'S *BREAKING NIGHT* (2010): A HUMANISTIC PSYCHOLOGICAL APPROACH

Naskah artikel tersebut, layak dan dapat disetujui untuk dipublikasikan.

Demikian persetujuan dibuat, semoga dapat diperlukan seperlunya.

Surakarta, 20 Juni 2014

Pembimbing I

Drs.M. Thoyibi,M.S.  
NIK/NIP : 410

Pembimbing II

Titis Setyabudi, S.S M. Hum.  
NIK/NIP : 948

**POSITIVE SELF-CONCEPT IN LIZ MURRAY'S**

***BREAKING NIGHT* (2010):**

**A HUMANISTIC PSYCHOLOGICAL APPROACH**

**Bryan Yusuf Dyactowo**

**A320100207**

**Department of English Education, School of Teacher Training and Education**

**Muhammadiyah University of Surakarta**

**Email: Dyactowo@gmail.com**

**ABSTRACT**

*This Study is about Positive Self-Concept in Liz Murray's Breaking Night (2010) directed by Liz Murray which is analyzed by using humanistic psychological approach. The objectives of the research is to analyze the memoir based on humanistic psychological approach by Carl Rogers. This research paper belongs to qualitative research. Data of the research are divided into two, primary data and secondary data. The primary data of the research is The Breaking Night memoir by author Liz Murray in 2010. While secondary data of the research are other materials taken from some books, author biographies, comments, website searching about Breaking Night memoir that support the analysis. The method to analyze of this data is descriptive analysis. The researcher describes two conclusions in his research. The first, based on structural analysis it shows that Liz Murray successfully combining all the structural elements of the story including character and characterization, setting, plot, point of view, theme as well into unity. The second, based on humanistic psychological analysis it shows that in the Breaking Night memoir Liz Murray illustrates psychological phenomena in which in individual is someone who wants to build positive self-concept in herself with always does positive things, thinks positive and has self confidence in living life.*

*Keywords: Self-Concept, Breaking Night, Humanistic Psychological*

## A. Introduction

*Breaking Night* is a memoir by Liz Murray and was published by Hyperion in 2010. The book is first published in United States and it is the first memoir written by Liz Murray. The memoir consists of 197 pages and has twelve chapters. Murray was born in the Bronx, New York on September 23, 1980 to poor and drug-addicted parents, both of whom would later contract HIV. She became a homeless just after she turned 15, when her mother died of AIDS, and her father moved to a homeless shelter. Despite personal adversity, Murray began attending the Humanities Preparatory Academy in Chelsea, Manhattan. Despite her late high school start and lack of a stable home, Murray graduated in two years. She was awarded a *New York Times* scholarship for needy students and was accepted into Harvard University, matriculating in the fall semester of 2000.

The researcher summarizes relevant literature review to prove the originality of this study. The previous study is a research conducted by Morris entitled *the Cycle: An Analysis of Liz Murray's Memoir Breaking Night* (2012). The research is an analysis of the subtitle of Liz Murray's *Breaking Night: A Memoir of Forgiveness, Survival, and My Journey from Homeless to Harvard*. In this research he explores three major themes of Liz Murray consist of forgiveness, survival, and journey, in order to illuminate her inner journey from nowhere to somewhere. The similarity of this research with the literature review is analyzing the same literary work by Liz Murray's *Breaking Night*. The differentiation between the literature reviews with this research is the researcher before focuses on analyzing subtitle and the issues the *forgiveness, Survival and Journey of Liz Murray* While in this research, researcher focuses on searching for positive self-concept in Liz Murray by using humanistic psychological approach

The objective of the study of this research is to depict the positive self-concept in Liz Murray reflected in *Breaking Night* memoir (2010) based on a humanistic psychological approach

According to Carl Rogers (1959) the self concept has three different components, that is how much value place on his or her self (Self Esteem or Self Worth), the view of oneself (Self Image), and what is he or she wish were really like (Ideal Self). Self-esteem is a term used in psychology to reflect a person's overall evaluation or appraisal of his or her own worth. Self-esteem encompasses beliefs and emotions such as triumph, despair, pride and shame. A person's self-esteem may be reflected in their behavior, such as in assertiveness, shyness, confidence or caution.

Self-image refers to the way people describe themselves, what they think they are like. *Physical Description* is judgment to physical of someone. *Social roles* are usually objective aspects of the self- image. *Personality traits* are more a matter of opinion and judgment and what people think they are like may be different from how others see them. *Existential Statements* are the feeling of individuals who feel a part of something.

Self-esteem is also partly determined by how much the self-image differs from the ideal self. If people's self-image is the kind of person they think they are, then their ideal self is the kind of person they would like to be. This can vary in extent and degree. People may want to be different in certain aspects, or they may want to be a totally different person or they may even wish we were someone else. Generally the greater the gap is between people's self-image and their ideal self, the lower our self-esteem (Gross, 2010; 526).

According to Carl Rogers (1959), people experience a state of incongruence when there is discrepancy between the perceived self and actual experience. For example, if individuals view themrself as person without hate and they experience hate, they are in a state of incongruence. The state of incongruence is one of the tension and internal confusion. When it exists and the individual is not aware of it, he is potentially vulnerable to anxiety.

## **B. Research Method**

This study belongs to qualitative method (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005: 3). In this method, there are two types of data source, namely primary and secondary data source. The primary data source is the memoir itself, meanwhile the secondary data sources are other materials related to the study. Both data are collected through library research (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005: 3).

In collecting data, the writer will takes some steps as follow: Reading the memoir repeatedly, taking notes of important parts both primary and secondary data, arranging the data into several groups based on its theoretical category, selecting particular parts considered important and relevant for analysis, and drawing conclusion.

In analyzing the data, the researcher applies a descriptive approach (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005: 11). The rsearcher analyzes the data based on humanistic psychological approach. Focus will be paid on the meaning of positive self-concept reflected in Liz Murray's *Breaking Night* memoir.

## **C. Research Findings and Discussion**

### **1. Findings**

In analyzing positive self-concept in Liz Murray's *Breaking Night* memoir, the researcher gets some findings that contain in Self-Esteem, Self-Image, Ideal-Self (congruence & Incongruence).

#### **a. Self-Esteem**

##### **1) Assertiveness**

Liz is in bad circumstance but she convinces herself and optimist that everything can change and also her life may change to be a better life. The optimism of Liz is an assertiveness of herself because optimist in implicit way makes Liz give assertiveness to herself to keep strong even though she is being in bad circumstance. Liz believes that as long as she wants to try she will be success. Her teachers also

have good relation with her and it means Liz is accepted in school's environment without discrimination although she is a homeless but they never regard as a problem for them. When Liz is studying she is often truant and also a homeless but she realizes that education is very important. She believes that education can show the right way to get better life. She convinces herself that education is important for her life. Liz thinks about how she can continue her study although she has no money, but Liz takes a scholarship to make her dream comes true. The another assertiveness in the memoir is shown when Liz decides to work to get money after she feels hungry everyday.

"Life has a way of doing that; one minute everything makes sense, the next, things change. People get sick. Families break apart, your friends could close the door on you. The rapid changes I had experienced were hitting me hard as I sat there, and yet sadness wasn't what came up in my gut. Out of nowhere, for whatever reason, a different feeling snuck up in its place, and hope. If life could change for the worst, I thought, then maybe life could change for the better (BN, p: 150)"

"Now I had teachers at Prep who held me to a higher standard, and that helped me rise to the occasion. If I kept at it, slowly, I could do this. The deeply personal relationships with my teachers in this intimate school setting made me believe it (BN, p: 162)."

"I decided to work into the early afternoon, pumping gas until just after lunchtime. Then I would make my way back uphill until I reached the Grand Concourse, where there was a whole strip of stores I could try my luck at (BN, p: 56)."

## 2) Shyness

The shyness of Liz Murray is shown in the memoir when she feels shy when she is in a dumpster with her father. Liz is very shy when she has some fleas in her hair. When Liz is studying and she feels itch in her head then she scratches her head and the fleas are falling down in her white paper. It makes her friends mocking her. Liz feels that she is different with the other especially with their friends in her class. Liz is shy about the circumstance of her family. She feels that it make her be

shame when her friends know about it. That situation makes her hide the information about her family of her friends.

“A serious man, dark-haired, with angular facial features that made him both handsome and stern-looking, with a young daughter, standing in the middle of garbage that everyone else walked wide circles around. I can remember feeling nakedly embarrassed, until Daddy stopped me in my tracks (BN, p: 13).”

“There was no way I'd ever enter that classroom again. How could I look into their faces, much less reclaim my seat between David and Tamioka? I wished I would die from the fumes, and that Mrs. Reynolds would be blamed for killing me (BN, p: 13).”

“It was the feeling that I was different that gnawed at me in the classroom, pressing me deeper into my exhaustion, racking my stomach with sharp pains. I was always grateful for the end of the day, when I could finally go (BN, p: 37).”

“I cherished Rick and Danny's family, yet in the time I'd known them, I had never mentioned my own family or given any real details about my home. It's not that Rick, Danny, or Liz never asked, so much as I was good at guarding my secrets, either immediately changing the subject or touching up aspects of myself that might tip them off (BN, p: 48).”

### 3) Confidence or Caution

Self-esteem that contained positive self-concept in the memoir is shown in Liz's self confidence. She does not care whatever she is. Her self confidence is shown in the moment when she tries to confidence although people are sneering to her but she ignores it. When Liz is working in the gas station Liz feels no confidence to do it but she forced herself to convince the owners of cars who want to fulfill gasoline to their cars. Liz often get bad score in her study at that time because she is often truant when she is in her previous school, but now Liz is optimist that she can get into next school and get score A for all subjects. She believes in her ability and she believes that she can change everything. When she is in a bad circumstance she illustrated like she is running track and jumping hurdles. Liz makes the analogy to motivate herself to never give up. She convinces to herself that just



herself who can get her into a collage not the other. When Liz is together with Carlos, she realizes that she has taken wrong way of life. Liz realizes and warns herself to avoid Carlos. When Liz lives in motel with Carlos, there is an assassination. She looks the news of assassination in the TV and Looks at it directly. Liz imagines how the assassination happened to her and Carlos is the doer. The situation shows how Liz tries to warn herself to be careful about someone around her.

“Staring up at Daddy in all his defiance, I felt proud, like he was sharing a secret with me: how to forget what other people thought of you. I wanted to feel the way he did, but it was something I'd have to work at. When I tried hard enough, for those moments, I could manage it, standing there beside Daddy and sneering back at the people who stared. But only if I used his voice to tell myself, over and over, that it was *their hang-up* (Bn, p: 14).”

“It was *possible* that I could get into the next school, and it was even *possible* I could get straight A's. Yes, based on all the things that happened before, it wasn't necessarily realistic, but it was possible that I could change everything. I ditched the idea of pizza and went for the interview (BN, p: 150).”

“I couldn't help but wonder, What if it had been Carlos and me instead of Rosa and her boyfriend? What if it had been my name the reporter uttered? *Sixteen-year-old Elizabeth Murray allegedly murdered at the hands of her boyfriend, eighteen-year-old drug dealer . . .* I imagined what it would do to Daddy, Lisa, Sam, and Bobby--all the people I loved--if my life ended like that (BN, p: 142).”

## **b. Self-Image**

### 1) Physical Description

The positive self-concept of Liz Murray that contained in self-image in the memoir is found when Liz describes her physical. She tells that her mom is beautiful woman and she feels that she has the same part of her mom's physical. Liz feels that she is short and thin and a dirty girl. She feels that she can disappear and people will ignore her because she is short and invisible.

“I could disappear in the crowds of people--who would notice a short skinny girl in need of a shower, with knotty, filthy hair, if I slung a hood over my head and walked with my eyes downcast, invisible? (BN, p: 69).”

## 2) Social Roles

Liz is daughter of Peter Finnerty and Jean Murray. She was born on the first day of autumn in September, 23, 1980. Liz seldom goes to school but she can graduate from sixth grade and continues to junior high school and it makes her friends envy. In social roles Liz is a homeless. She sleeps everywhere and takes her school's book wherever she is. That bad circumstance does not make Liz down but she has been motivated to get a better life. Liz gets scholarship from New York Times and she is accepted in Harvard. After Liz is graduated from Harvard University, Now she is a leader of her Manifest Living company in New York City.

“I was born on the first day of autumn, at the end of a long heat wave that had the neighborhood kids forcing open the fire hydrants for relief, and had Ma lodging loud, buzzing fans in every window. On the afternoon of September 23, 1980 (BN, p: 8).”

"I am Roger Lehecka from the New York Times Scholarship Program. I am just calling to tell you that you are one of the six students chosen to be awarded the New York Times Scholarship!" (BN, p: 185-186).”

“In New York City I founded and currently direct Manifest Living, a company that empowers adults to create lives that are most meaningful to them. In doing this work, it just so happened, I found a path that has become most meaningful to me (BN, p: 191).”

## 3) Personal Traits

Liz is a careful girl, she always reckons her attitude and behavior when she is being with her parents. Liz also feels that she has a skill to get an attention from her parents. Liz's parents are drugs addict and they never care about her and also hurt Liz's feeling. Although her

parents do like that, but Liz always forgives them and always loves them. Bad circumstance that Liz gets in her life makes her grow to be more mature than her friends. She knows about sex, knows about how to use drugs and she can sleep everywhere. Liz is not a good girl in fashion and she is so dirty. She is very slovenly and seldom takes a bath so it makes her friends feel repugnant. Her appearance makes her friends humiliate her and ignore her in the class. But Liz does not care about it and she shows to them that she can graduate like them.

“I carefully thought out choices about my actions and exact words. This way, I didn't leave things to chance. Instead, it was a skill I developed, knowing exactly how to get their attention. In this case, Daddy was giving me what he thought to be a "boy's toy," and I knew exactly how to respond. Years of listening carefully to Daddy's comments scorning "girly" things told me so. (BN, p:14)”.

“I forgave her in that moment, and I forgave her again two months later when she went into the freezer and took the Thanksgiving turkey we'd gotten from the church and sold it to a neighbor so that she could buy another hit. Forgiving her didn't mean that I wasn't devastated. I was heartbroken and deeply hurt whenever they left us hungry. I just didn't blame Ma or Daddy for my hurt (BN, p: 32).”

#### 4) Existential Statements

The existential statement of self-image of Liz's positive self-concept is shown when Liz feels that she is a part of the world. Although Liz is a homeless and people never care about her but she feels that she is a part of the world.

“More and more, the summer I was nine years old, I itched to be outside, to be a part of what went on in the world (BN, p: 48).”

#### c. Ideal-Self (Congruence & Incongruence)

People experience a state of incongruence when there is discrepancy between the perceived self and actual experience, the state of incongruence is one of the tension and internal confusion (Carl Rogers, 1959: 186). Liz admires her father. She has been inspired her father about the way to ignore what people is thinking about her. Liz tries to be strong like her

father and she wants to be like him. She wants to be adult but she does not want aid from her mother because it will involve her mother. Liz wants to do it by herself. She wants to get a job to get much money to avoid her hunger. Although she is still young to work but she keeps doing for the sake of money and to avoid her hunger. Liz is confused about herself because physically she is girl but in attitude she is like a boy. She considers herself half man and half woman and also she considers that she is different. Liz tries to help her mother to give what she needs but she feels that she is only made things worst. In other hand she always wants to be with her mother but she also does not want to be infected her mother's disease. Liz wants to stop to steal things in supermarket. She usually steals to survive her life. After she grows to be adult she feels guilty when she will do it again. There is an inner flaming in Liz to stop steal again.

“Staring up at Daddy in all his defiance, I felt proud, like he was sharing a secret with me: how to forget what other people thought of you. I wanted to feel the way he did, but it was something I'd have to work at. When I tried hard enough, for those moments, I could manage it, standing there beside Daddy and sneering back at the people who stared. But only if I used his voice to tell myself, over and over, that it was *their hang-up* (BN, p: 14).”

“I wondered what starting school would be like, and how it was supposed to help me become grown up. I wondered what *grown up* could mean, when there were different types of adults all around me. Though I wanted to, I didn't dare ask Ma to help me figure things out, because I knew it would only make her feel bad about herself and the scrounging we had to do to get by. Some things I was just going to have to figure out on my own (BN, p: 22).”

"Yeah," I responded immediately, stepping forward. "I do. Will you show me where?" I felt as if acid were eating away at my stomach. "I'll work anywhere," I told him. "Can we go now?" (BN, p: 54).”

## 2. Discussion

The character, especially the major, can be a ‘tool’ or actor who is given the task to deliver the author's intention through the memoir. To support it, Liz used herself as the major character. In *Breaking Night*, to

support the author intention she places the character in the setting of New York City in 1980s- 2000s. The author wants to show the situation during at that time in New York City, and the social condition in her place. The author uses the traditional plot because the story is about the future. It tells about the journey of her life and begins from her past to her future.

*Breaking Night* memoir is written from first person point of view. She always used narration every beginning of the story because she wants the reader can deeply understand the whole story in the memoir. The writer uses the first point of view to make the reader easily understand what she writes about and the moral value that included in the memoir. Based on style, *Breaking Night* memoir uses standard English and slang language.

Based on the structural analysis, it can be concluded that Liz is successfully combining all the structural elements of the story including character and characterization, setting, plot, point of view, theme as well into unity. Every element supports other elements and cannot be separated. It can make the story easier to understand because all of the structural elements have relation each other.

In the positive self-esteem Liz is a girl who is never care about what people think about her. Whatever situation that she faced, she is always thinking positive and optimist that the situation will be better. Her parents do not care about her and they are often hurt Liz's feeling but Liz is a clement woman who will always forgives her parents. Liz has bad circumstance and it makes her often truant when she is studying, but Liz realizes that education will rebuild her life to be better.

Positive self-image of Liz in the memoir is Liz Murray is a daughter of Peter Finnerty and Jean Murray. She was born in the first day of autumn in September 23, 1980. Liz feels that she has part of her physical that same with her mother. She describes that her mother is a beautiful woman and she admires her. Bad circumstance makes Liz to fight to get better life and it makes positive ideal-self in herself. Liz wants to be like her father who can ignore people who always humiliate him because with that way Liz

can be strong to continue her life. In the incongruence situation Liz feels that she is a half man and a half woman she also feels that she is different with the others but she cannot deny the destiny of her as a woman. When her mother infected AIDS she feels that she is a cause of it. Her love to her mother makes her to let her mom uses drugs everyday and finally drugs make her mother pass away.

The humanistic psychological analysis above shows that the positive self-concept of the major character. Liz Murray has positive self-concept and always positive thinking whatever her situation and it makes her life to be better. Liz as a major character has a goal in her life to get better in family, education, and friends. And positive self-concept is a way to deliver to do it.

According to Wellek and Warren (1942:75) The psychological is the study of the psychological types and laws present within works of literature. By the *Breaking Night* memoir, it can be understood that the author illustrates psychological phenomena in which in individual is the major character who wants to build positive self-concept in herself with always does positive things, thinks positive and has self confidence in living life. The *Breaking Night* illustrates psychological phenomena that contained in its story.

#### **D. Conclusion**

It shows that in *Breaking Night* Liz Murray illustrates psychological phenomena in which in individual is someone who wants to build positive self-concept in herself with always does positive things, thinks positive and has self confidence in living life. The *Breaking Night* illustrates psychological phenomena that contained in its story. The story tells Liz Murray who has parents that addicted to drugs and has bad circumstance in her life. When her mother is passed away she becomes a homeless and lives in outside. Her bad circumstance does not make her down and give up in living life because she keeps positive self-concept in her life. The positive self-concept makes her to think and does positive and it also

makes her to have self confidence in her life. Liz Murray experienced bad circumstance but the positive self-concept makes her to be stronger and success in living life. Although Liz is a homeless and has bad circumstance but the positive self-concept in her life makes her to continue her studies until she gets a scholarship from *New York Times* and the same time she is accepted in Harvard University

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Gross, Richard. 2005. *Psychology: The Science of Mind and Behaviour*. London; Hodder Education.
- Murray, Liz. 2010. *Breaking Night Memoir: A Memoir of Forgiveness, Survival, and My Journey from Homeless to Harvard*. New York. Epub Edition.
- Murray, Liz. 2007. *ABC News 20/20 Homeless to Harvard*. America Broadcasting Company. DVD. 13 Oct. 2013.
- Rogers, C. R. 1959. *A Theory of Therapy, Personality, and Interpersonal Relationships, as Developed in the client-centered Framework*. In S. Koch (Ed.), *Psychology: A study of a science* (Vol. 3, pp. 184-256). New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Kennedy, X.J. 1983. *Literature an Introduction to Fiction, Poetry and Drama*. Boston. Little Brown and Company.
- Koesnoesoebroto. 1988. *The Anatomy of Fiction*. Jakarta: Depdikbud.
- Purkey, W. 1988. *An Overview of Self-Concept Theory for Counselors*. ERIC Clearinghouse on Counseling and Personnel Services, Ann Arbor, Mich. (An ERIC/CAPS Digest: ED 304630)
- Pervin, A. Lawrence. 1984. *Personality: Theory and Research Fourth Edition*. New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc
- Wellek, Rene & Werren, Austin. 1942. *Theory of Literature*. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, Inc.
- Denzin, Norman K and Yvonna S. Lincoln. 2005. *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research*. Thousand Oaks, California: SAGE Publication.



## VIRTUAL REFERENCES

*Liz Murray (author)*

([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Liz\\_Murray](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Liz_Murray)). Accessed on Tuesday, September 24 2013 at 06.45.

Morris, Adrienne. 2012. *Breaking the Cycle: An Analysis of Liz Murray's Memoir Breaking Night*.

(<https://sites.google.com/a/marymount.edu/adrienne-morris-cultural-studies-portfolio/en240-intro-to-visual-cultural-studies-fall/breaking-the-cycle-an-analysis-of-liz-murray-s-memoir-breaking-night>). Accessed on Tuesday, January 15 2014 at 01.00 pm.

[Book Review - Breaking Night - By Liz Murray - NYTimes.com](#)

([http://www.nytimes.com/2010/09/12/books/review/McKelvey-t.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2010/09/12/books/review/McKelvey-t.html?_r=0) ). Accessed on Tuesday, April 08, 2014 at 11.00 am.

Reader Response- Breaking Night - By Liz Murray.

(<http://www.barnesandnoble.com/w/breaking-night-liz-murray/1100562304?ean=9781401310592>). Accessed on Tuesday, April 08, 2014 at 11.00 am.