THE NEED TO REACH A BETTER LIFE IN LIZ MURRAY’S *BREAKING NIGHT* (2010): A HUMANISTIC PSYCHOLOGICAL APPROACH

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THE NEED TO REACH A BETTER LIFE IN LIZ MURRAY’S BREAKING NIGHT (2010): A HUMANISTIC PSYCOLOGICAL APPROACH

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ABSTRACT

This Study is about The Need to Reach a Better Life in Liz Murray’s Breaking Night (2010) directed by Liz Murray which is analyzed by using humanistic psychological approach. The objective of the research is to analyze the memoir based on humanistic psychological approach by Abraham Maslow. This research paper belongs to qualitative research. The data sources consist of primary data and secondary data sources. The primary data of the research is The Breaking Night memoir and the secondary data of the research are the other sources related to the analysis such as the author biographies, comments, website searching about Breaking Night memoir that support the analysis, books of literary theory of the object and issue. The method to analyze of this data is descriptive analysis. The researcher describes two conclusions in his research. The first, the author reveals that all of human beings have different needs and some motives why they have to do something. Like Liz Murray in the Breaking Night memoir, she also has some needs. She has to struggle to reach a better life. The second, based on humanistic psychological analysis, it can be concluded that in this memoir, the author illustrates the motivation underlying Liz Murray’s needs. They are: physiological needs, safety in herself, love and belongingness needs, self-esteem needs, and self-actualization needs, or the needs for personal fulfillment.

Keywords: Needs, Breaking Night, Humanistic Psychological
A. Introduction

A need is a thing that is necessary for an organism to maintain their life. To most psychologists, need is a psychological feature that arouses an organism to action toward a goal, giving purpose and direction to behavior. Maslow (1943:375) stated that people are motivated to achieve certain needs. When one need is fulfilled a person seeks to fulfill the next one, and so on.

In order to live properly humans have to fulfill not only physical needs but also psychological needs. The physical need consists of the need for food, drink, place, safety, healthy, etc. The psychological need consists of the needs to get happiness, affection, love, self-esteem, etc. Human being is a ‘whole person’, who not only has physic and cognition, but more importantly has feeling and emotion, Maslow (in Feist, 1985:403).

There are some literary works which tell about human`s needs. One of the literary works is memoir entitled Breaking Night. Breaking Night is a memoir written by Liz Murray and was published in the United States by Hyperion on September 7, 2010. This memoir has twelve chapters and 197 pages. Liz Murray was born in the Bronx, New York on September 23th, 1980 at the early of autumn. In 2009, Liz Murray completed high school and won a New York Times scholarship while homeless, and graduated from Harvard University. She has been awarded The White House Project Role Model Award, a Christopher Award, as well as the Chutzpah Award, which was given to Liz by Oprah Winfrey. Today, she travels the world to deliver motivational speeches and workshops to inspire others. Liz is the founder and director of Manifest Living, a New York-based company that empowers adults to create the results they want in their own lives.

The researcher has tried to find the literary review of the study on the memoir. The previous study is a research conducted by Melinda Ayu Diyah Kurniawati, entitled Family Conflict Reflected in Breaking Night Memoir (2010): A Sociological Approach. Her research belongs to qualitative research. The researcher finds the correlation between the theories, story and social background of American society in the middle of the twentieth century. This research only focuses on social aspect, economic aspect and cultural aspect which are interrelated closely with material.
Maslow’s hierarchy of needs illustrated as a pyramid. The pyramid consists of five levels. The needs are; physiological needs, safety needs, love and belongingness needs, self-esteem, and self-actualization needs. Physiological needs is the most basic, powerful and urgent of all human needs that must be completed in human life. This basic need include food, water, sleep, oxygen, etc.

Safety needs are used to feel secure and safe, to seek pleasure and avoid pain. In this level include needs for security and safety, protection, law, and freedom from anxiety, fear, and danger. Someone who feel unsafe, is having much regularity and stability. They will prevent unwilling things happened to them.

Love and belongingness needs as the next needs that must fulfilled in human life. According to Maslow (in Huffman, Vernoy and Vernoy, 1997: 383), Love and belongingness needs is the needs to affiliate with others, be accepted and give and receive attention. Human cannot live alone in the world. They need to give and receive affection from other. Therefore, human need to have other such as family, friends, work group, society or neighbourhood.

Self-esteem needs can be classification into two categories. The first is self-esteem from inner side of their self. People will analyze their confidence, competence, freedom. The second is respect from others. The respect from others are prestige, acceptance, attention, and appreciation.

In Maslow’s hierarchy of needs, self-actualization is higher level of human’s needs. Maslow (in Hjelle and Ziegler 1992: 454) states that self actualization characterized as the person’s desire to be come everything that he or she is capable of becoming. The person who has achieved this highest level presses toward the full use and exploitation of his or her talents, capacities, and potentialities.
B. Research method

Type of the study that the researcher uses to make this research is descriptive qualitative research with purposes to analyze novel using humanistic psychological approach. The steps of conducting the research are (1) determining the type of the study, (2) determining the object of the study, (3) determining the data sources, (4) determining the technique of data collection, (5) determining the technique for data analysis.

The object of the research is *Breaking Night* memoir written by Liz Murray and has been published by Hyperion in 2010. It is analyzed by using Humanistic psychology.

The data of this research is divided into two kinds, there are: Primary data sources and Secondary data sources. Primary data sources in this research consist of data collected from Liz Murray’s *Breaking Night* (2010) in English and Indonesia version. The secondary data are the supporting data taken from some references such as author biographies, comments, website searching about Breaking Night memoir that support the analysis, books of literary theory of the object and issue.

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.

The researcher uses descriptive analysis to analyze the data. Descriptive analysis concerns with the structural elements of the novel and humanistic psychological approach which describe and correlate them.

C. Research Finding and Discussion

1. Findings

The researcher gets some research findings in analyzing Breaking Night memoir. Each finding has some cases to be discussed. After the findings have examined, all of the components will get back together in a schematic manner in the discussion.
a. **Physiological needs**

The description of the physiological needs which happened to Liz is crucial in the story. She has problem to fulfill her basic needs. She can not get food easily. Most days, she looks for food in fridge but there is no food to eat. She always saw the fridge only contained egg and mayonnaise sandwiches.

“We hadn't eaten since that morning, when Lisa and I had rolled-up mayonnaise sandwiches. Most days, that's all we ever ate, eggs and mayonnaise sandwiches. Lisa and I hated them equally, but they got us through a lot of days when my empty stomach cramped and burned, and all we would have had otherwise was water (BN, p: 16)”.

Liz often steals food in supermarket with her friends to get food. She does it because money is very worthy to expense and she needs her money to save.

“I entered through the automatic doors of Met Food supermarket four blocks away from my building, into air-conditioning. Stealing was something I knew I could do. I would take a package of steak and a stick of butter. I could afford the food with my tips, but until I was sure I could earn money consistently, I did not want to spend any of what I had. In the meantime, I would settle for taking things; after doing it so many times with Rick and Danny, I was sure I could manage without getting caught (BN, p: 57)”.

b. **Safety needs**

These needs include needs for security, protection, law, and freedom from anxiety, fear, and danger. Liz cannot fulfill her safety needs because she is a homeless. She leaves her apartment because her parents are drug addict.

“After a few weeks of being so dependent on people, I began sleeping a few nights a week on the subway, alone (BN, p: 145)”.
Liz has lost the safety needs of the parents, but she gets comfort from her friends, especially from Carlos and Sam. They always helped Liz and making her feel protected.

“It was a legitimate fear. Every time Carlos left, we had to wonder whether he was ever coming back. I knew in the same way Sam knew that your life could change in an instant. People caught viruses. Eviction notices were served. You fell in love. Parents just let go of their children. Stability was an illusion. Carlos had similar holes in his life; so did Sam. Without him or her, I wasn't sure I could manage (BN, p: 16)”.

c. Love and belongingness needs

Love and belongingness needs as the next needs must also be fulfilled in human life. Belongingness and love needs is the needs to affiliate with others, be accepted and give and receive attention. The needs of Liz Murray that can be categorized in this need is family and friendship. Liz has her love and belongingness need fulfill even though she came from drug addict parents. She just hates drugs not her parents because she loves them. For Liz, her family is the important thing in the world, so she will do anything for her family.

“If I hated anything at all, I hated drugs and addiction itself, but I did not hate my parents. I loved my parents, and I knew they loved me. I was sure of it (BN, p: 32).”

In other hand, although her parents are addicted to drugs and rarely care about her but they really love her. Especially is her mother.

"I love you, pumpkin. Don't ever let anyone tell you you're not my baby. You got that? No matter how old you get, you are always my baby (BN, p: 65)”.

d. Self-Esteem needs

1) Confidence

Her self confidence is shown in the moment when she tries to confidence although people are sneering to her but she ignores it. Liz never cares about what people think about her and she feels proud of herself.
“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)”.

2) Freedom

When Liz was a teenager, she did not want to be unfettered by the rules of school. It made her often truant and rarely home. She spent more time with her friends than with her family.

“And now I had Sam, and my days were enlivened with cutting school, dreaming about the future with my friends, and a new vitality I'd never known before. What it boiled down to was, the more joy I experienced with my friends, the harder it was to come home to Ma and an apartment filled with her sickness (BN, p: 97)”.

3) Competence

She wants to improve her life, at least she has ability and uses her ability to graduate in two years. Although Liz does not have a home, but her able to compete with children who have a life better than her. She was able to compete with other and catch up as quickly as possible.

“I learned that there is a distinct difference between saying something and doing something, just as there is a distinct difference between setting a goal and actually living the reality of that goal. I wanted to catch up as quickly as possible, so I set a target: I would graduate with an A average, nothing less. And I would do it in two years, while homeless (BN, p: 165)”.

4) Prestige

Liz Murray is a smart woman and has prestige in education. With her grades, she has so many schools to pick from. But she had to think of a way to pay her tuition. Finally, she received a scholarship from the
New York Times to continue her studies at Harvard University because of her hard work.

“Weeks later, as I set out to spend the afternoon by myself working on my scholarship application process, I quickly found out why Jessie had given me that look. In her empty office, I flipped the fluorescent light off and worked only by sunlight, which shone in through the crisscross window guards (BN, p: 179)”.

5) Appreciation

Liz also needs appreciation from others. Liz feels inferiority because she is homeless, but she is able to change her life better. She also sets up a workshop and becomes someone who inspires others.

“First, a little explanation of how that day came to be. That day with the Dalai Lama became yet another occurrence in my life that caused my friends in the Bronx to tease me with my nickname: "Forrest Gump." Over the years, they have grown used to me traveling to various countries, working with thousands of people to deliver workshops and speeches to inspire others (BN, p: 191)”.

e. Self-Actualization needs

1) Talent

Liz has the ability to invite others to keep the spirit of life even in bad situation. Now she devotes herself to running her own company, Manifest Living, a New York-based company that empowers adults to create the results they want in their own lives.

“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 (BN, p: 191)”.

2) Capacities

The capacity is shown in Liz’s psychological development. Her psychological development was started from the moment when she attended Prep, she wanted to get scored A on her transcript and many of which were high A’s.
“Sitting in Jessie's empty guidance counselor office, I ran my fingertip down the columns of grades: 92, 94, 100, 100, 100, 98--more than ten classes per semester in total, many of which were high A's. As I'd planned, I was moving at a pace of one full school year per semester (BN, p: 178)”.

3) Potential

Liz Murray is a homeless person who made through a difficult life. Today, she travels the world to deliver motivational speeches and workshops to inspire others. In addition, she has the potential to be the author.

“Thank you to Elizabeth Garrison, and her sons, my Puerto Rican brothers, Rick, Danny, John, and Sean, whose names appear in these pages and who fed, housed, and loved me like one of their own. I love each of you and want you to know that I am forever grateful for the difference you have made in my life. We will always be family (BN, p: 195-196)”.

2. Discussion

After analyzing Breaking Night (2010) memoir by correlating the underlying theory, the structural analysis of the memoir and its discussion, and the humanistic psychological needs, the next step is completing this research by relating the entire element to one another and putting them back into unity. By using humanistic psychological theory by Maslow to analyze Breaking Night (2010) memoir the researcher understands about the needs which are reflected on the main characters in the story. They are shown in the: (1) Physiological needs, (2) Safety needs, (3) Love and Belongingness needs, (4) Self-esteem needs, and (5) Self-actualization needs.

The physiological need is the need to get food, water, sleep, oxygen, shelter. The main character of the memoir is Liz Murray. She cannot fulfill her physiological because she comes from poor. As a child Liz wanted a better life as observed by her parents and eating good food. The money is spent by their parents to buy drugs eventually she was often hungry, then she decided to work in order to buy food.
The second need is the safety needs. These needs include needs for security, protection, freedom from anxiety, fear, and danger. Liz cannot fulfill her safety needs because she is a homeless. She leaves her apartment because her parents are drug addict. Her parents are busy with drugs and rarely care about her. She had to take care of herself without any attention from her parents and struggling to fulfill her needs. Because she is homeless, she cannot get security, protection, and always feels anxiety and fear he cannot fulfill his needs.

The third need is love and belongingness needs. This need is the needs to affiliate with the other, be accepted and give and receive attention. People always seek love in friendship and relation. People also want to build relation in their family, towards their mother, father, brother, sister, and others.

The fourth need is self-esteem needs. Liz is a girl who never cares about what people think about her. Whatever situation that she faced is, she is always 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 forgive 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. When she wants to college she has no money but she always struggles and never give up to continue her study. Finally Liz gets a scholarship from New York Times and she is accepted in Harvard University.

The fifth is self-actualization needs. Self-actualization is higher level of human needs. This need is characterized as the person’s desire to become everything that he or she is capable of becoming. The person who has achieved this highest level presses toward the full use and exploitation of his or her talents, capacities, and potentialities.
D. Conclusion

Referring to the problem statement and the analysis in the previous chapter, the researcher would like to draw some conclusions. Liz Murray as the author reveals that all of human beings have different needs and some motives why they have to do something. Based on humanistic psychological analysis, it can be concluded that in this memoir, the author illustrates the motivation underlying Liz Murray’s needs. They are: physiological needs, safety needs, love and belongingness needs, self-esteem needs, and self-actualization needs.


