

THE SELF ACTUALIZATION OF THE MAIN CHARACTER "IN THE PELICAN BRIEF" FILM DIRECTED BY ALAN J. PAKULA

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Abstract

Characteristics of self-actualization are the terms to identify whether a person is categorized into self-actualized person or not. A self-actualized person is a person who is living creatively and fully using his or her potentials to realize his desire for self-fulfillment, namely, to the tendency for him to become actualized in his own potentials. This research is discussing about the characteristics of self-actualization of the main character, Derby Shaw in fulfilling her self-actualization needs in "Pelican Brief" film directed by J. Pakula in 1993. The method of collecting data in this research is qualitative descriptive research where the data are in the form of sentences or utterances from the script of the film and then they are categorized based on the Abraham Maslow theory of personality especially the motives and the characteristic of self-actualization namely 1) An Accurate perception of reality, 2) Independence, Creativity, Spontaneity, 3) Acceptance of themselves and others, 4) A Problem-centered outlook, rather than a centered outlook, 5) Enjoyment of Life, 6) Good Sense of Humor. After they are categorized, they will be explained to find out the characteristic of self-actualization in the film

Keyword: self-actualization need, Pelican Brief, characteristic of self-actualized person

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Self-actualization according to Abraham Maslow which is known as "Hierarchy of Needs" is the desires to fulfill one's highest potential differently in every person depends on what he is fitted for. For example a musician must make music, an artist must paint, a poet must write. These needs are the highest needs of the human being. They are the needs of a human being to explore himself in order to achieve his full potentials or to actualize himself (Carl Roger 1980: 550)

A person is categorized into self-actualized person if what he has characteristic of self-actualized person, they are 1) Accurate perception of reality, 2) Independence,

creativity and spontaneity 3) Acceptance of himself and others 4) Problems centered outlook 5) Enjoyment of life and 6) A good sense of humor.

One of the actualized persons can be seen from one of the main characters of "The Pelican Brief" Darby Shaw (Julia Roberts). She acted as the second year Tulane University Law School student. She wrote down legal brief telling about her theory on why two Supreme Court Justices were killed she also delivered her legal view to her law professor, mentor and lover Thomas Callahan (Sam Shepard).

The Pelican Brief is a 1993 legal political thriller based on the novel of the same name by John Grisham. Directed by Alan J.

Pakula, the film stars Julia Roberts in the role of young law student Darby Shaw and Denzel Washington as Washington Herald reporter Gray Grantham. Music was composed by James Horner. This was the last film to feature Pakula as a producer and writer before his death.

1.2 Limitation of the Problem

The problems in this research deals with the characteristics of self-actualization of the main character, Derby Shaw..

1.3 Formulation of the Problem

Based on the background of the study above, the writer can formulate the problem of the study as follows:

- a. How does the main character, Darby Shaw fulfills her self-actualization needs viewed from Maslow's Theory?
- b. What characteristics of self-actualization of the main character of the film which can be seen?

2. REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE

2.1 Characteristic of Self-Actualization

According to Maslow (1962,1971) in Kalat (1993:551) there are 6 characteristics that people with a self-actualized personality shows the following characteristics :

a) An Accurate perception of reality

Self actualizing people are freer of unwarranted optimism, pessimism, and other defensive distortions of reality. They are able to evaluate people and events with considerable accuracy.

It means that people perceive the world as it is, not as they would like is to be, but they are willing to accept uncertainty and ambiguity when necessary.

b) Independence, Creativity, Spontaneity

It means that A person freely to choose what they want and to create their minds. While these people are able to follow generally accepted social expectations, they do not feel confined by these norms in their thoughts or behaviors. In addition, Self-actualizing individuals behave more spontaneously because they better understand their true motives, emotions, and abilities.

c) Acceptance of themselves and others

Self-actualizers are more tolerant of human weakness. They avoid judging other people or themselves, although they may experience some guilt about any personal deficiencies that they have been unable to overcome.

Not only do self-actualized people fully accept themselves; they also embrace other people for who they are. Other individuals are treated the same regardless of background, current status, or other socio-economic and cultural factors.

d) A Problem- centered outlook, rather than a centered outlook

Self-actualizers tend to have a consuming mission in life that occupies much their time and energy. It is often motivated by a strong sense of personal ethics and responsibility. They enjoy applying their problem-solving skills to real-world situations and like helping other people improve their own lives.

e) Enjoyment of Life

While self-actualized people have concrete goals, they do not see things as simply a means to an end. The journey toward achieving a goal is just as important and enjoyable as actually accomplishing the goal.

f) A Good Sense of Humor

Self-actualized individuals generally have a thoughtful sense of humor. They are able to enjoy the humor in situations and laugh at themselves, but they do not ridicule or make fun at the expense of another person's feelings.

Self-actualization is at the top of Maslow's hierarchy of needs - becoming "fully human"...maturity or self-actualization - and is considered a part of the humanistic approach to personality. Humanistic psychology is one of several methods used in psychology for studying, understanding, and evaluating personality. The humanistic approach was developed because other approaches, such as the psychodynamic approach made famous by Sigmund Freud, focused on unhealthy individuals that exhibited disturbed behavior; whereas the humanistic approach focuses on healthy, motivated people and tries to determine how they define the self while maximizing their potential.

2.4 Previous Study

To prove the originality of this study, the writer presents the previous study can be seen from Dwi Susilowati (2010) entitled "THE ELEMENTS OF AMERICAN INVESTIGATIVE JOURNALISM IN THE NOVEL OF THE PELICAN BRIEF BY JOHN GRISHAM" in Dipenogoro University. She discussed about the element of American investigative Journalism and the source of the data for her research are taken from the novel of Pelican Brief rather than the film. The method of collecting data in her research is descriptive qualitative research. The data are in the form of quotations from the novel. She does not use any approach to analyze, thus she only

used intrinsic element in analyzing her research.

3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

The research which is applied in this research is called qualitative research. One of characteristics of qualitative research can be seen from the form of the data. The form of data in qualitative research is not in the form of number. Thus the data is in the form of dialogue, utterance, description or explanation about the main character of Darby Shaw. The dialogues or utterance which are delivered by the characters of the Pelican Brief movie.

Qualitative research is a means for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem. The process of research involves emerging questions and procedures, data typically collected in the participant's setting, data analysis in deductively building from particulars to general themes, and the researcher making interpretations of the meaning of the data. The final written report has a flexible structure. Those who engage in this form of inquiry support a way of looking at research that honors an inductive style, a focus on individual meaning, and the importance of rendering the complexity of a situation (Creswell, 2009:4).

Based on explanation above, the qualitative research does not use numeric or calculation data and this research describes systematically, factual and accurate about the facts and causal relationships phenomenon under study. This research uses a script in the form of words as the writer's research data.

3.2 Source of the Data

According to Creswell (2009: 196) explained that the data source of qualitative research is words, expressions, and the rest is additional data such as documents and others. The primary data of this research are taken from dialogues or utterances, explanation or descriptions which are taken from the script of the film and the film itself namely Pelican Brief conducted by Pakula in 1993. The dialogues or utterances in the film which become the data of this research can be delivered by the main characters or supporting characters as long as they have closely relationship with the topic of the research.

The secondary data of this research is supporting data (Creswell, 2009: 208). They are taken from both printed materials and electronic materials. The secondary data relate to the theories which will be the basis for the writer to analyze the data.

3.3 Data Collection Procedure

According to Creswell, (2009:178) explained that the data collection procedures include setting the boundaries for the study, collecting information through unstructured or semi structured observation, interviews, documents, and visual material, as well as establishing the protocol for recording information.

The data of this research are collected from the script of the Pelican Brief movie and visual material the movie itself. The data from both sources will be sorted based on the topic of the research. Thus the data which only have relationship with self-actualization of the main character Darby Shaw which will be analyzed.

3.4 Data Analysis Procedure

After the data which only relate to the self-actualization of the Darby Shaw are collected from the sources both from printed such as book or others and non printed material such as in the form of file or soft copy, they will be classified into two namely whether the data relate to the values of self-actualization of the main character the data relate only to how Darby Shaw, the main character fulfills her self-actualization. If the data relate to the values of the main character, the data will be classified into four types namely awareness, honesty, freedom or trust. The second type is the classification of the characteristics of self actualization of the main character. This classification is divided into Characteristic of Self-Actualization.

According to Maslow (1962,1971) in Kalat (1993:551) there are 6 characteristics that people with a self-actualized personality shows the following characteristics they are first An Accurate perception of reality. Self actualizing people are freer of unwarranted optimism, pessimism, and other defensive distortions of reality. They are able to evaluate people and events with considerable accuracy. Second Independence, Creativity, Spontaneity.

A person freely to choose what they want and to create their minds. While these people are able to follow generally accepted social expectations, he does not feel confined by these norms in their thoughts or behaviors. In addition, Self-actualizing individuals behave more spontaneously because they better understand their true motives, emotions, and abilities. Third Acceptance of themselves and others. In this case

A self-actualizer is more tolerant of human weakness. He avoids judging other people or

themselves, although he may experience some guilt about any personal deficiencies that they have been unable to overcome. The fourth is Problem-centered outlook, rather than a centered outlook

Self-actualizers tend to have a consuming mission in life that occupies much their time and energy. It is often motivated by a strong sense of personal ethics and responsibility. They enjoy applying their problem-solving skills to real-world situations and like helping other people improve their own lives. The fifth is Enjoyment of Life

While self-actualized people have concrete goals, they do not see things as simply a means to an end. The journey toward achieving a goal is just as important and enjoyable as actually accomplishing the goal. The sixth is A Good Sense of Humor

Self-actualized individuals generally have a thoughtful sense of humor. They are able to enjoy the humor in situations and laugh at themselves, but they do not ridicule or make fun at the expense of another person's feelings. After the data are well arranged and classified based on the classification above, they will be analyzed and explained one by one.

4 DISCUSSION

4.1 An Accurate perception of reality

Self-actualizing people are freer of unwarranted optimism, pessimism, and other defensive distortions of reality. They are able to evaluate people and events with considerable accuracy. This can be seen in below quotation:

“A police officer entered Mr. Hardwick's apartment to serve him a warrant...
...for an unpaid violation for drinking in public.
They caught him with an open beer

When he entered
Mr. Hardwick's bedroom...
...he found him in bed with a man.
The officer arrested Hardwick...
...for violating Georgia's statute which outlaws sodomy.
Even though Georgia dropped the case...
...Hardwick challenged the constitutionality of the statute.
Now, what was his claim?
- That it violates the right of privacy”
(00:09:09-10:36).

The characteristic of self-actualized person can be seen from Derby Shaw comment on the lecture where according to her the police violated the right of privacy. This event happened when Prof. Thomas Callahan (Sam Shepard) gave his lecture about the case of Hardwick. At that time Hardwick had violated drinking law, he drank in public. The police officer tried to arrest him when he was in his bedroom with a man and he was arrested him for violating Georgia's statute.

The self-actualized people perceived the world as it is, not as they would like is to be, but they are willing to accept uncertainty and ambiguity when necessary. In this characteristic of self-actualization is to accept her uncertainty in her safety because she was in danger to face all president men who committed crime. She hides in Washington to avoid this danger. This can be seen from below quotation:

“they'll do anything
not to be exposed.
Where can you hide?
Go back to Washington”. (01:38:10-19)

Accepting condition of uncertainty in above quotation can be seen when Derby Shaw safety is in danger where all president men will do anything in order the brief is not expose to

the public because if it is exposed the president will lose his chance of reelection.

“Now if your brief is right
and it ever reaches the light of day...
...the president loses
any chance of reelection.
The men around the president
won't let that happen. (01:37:15-24)

The only person who know the brief is Derby Shaw, on the contrary all president men do not want the brief exposed, even they think that the brief has never exist. They will do anything include killing Derby Shaw. Thus if she disappeared, there would be no justice.

...all said the brief doesn't exist.
You may be the only witness to the fact
there is a brief. If you disappear...
...so does justice. (01:37:33-44)

Other quotation about accurate perception about reality as one of characteristics in self-actualized person can be seen when Derby Shaw explained the backround of the assassination of two justices to Political reporter Gray Grantham

So if you're Mattiece...
...and you don't mind killing
a couple of Supremes...
...now's the time to kill them,
when you can predict their
replacement.
But why Jensen?
He shared one piece
of common ground with Rosenberg:
Protecting the environment (01:33:42-53)

According to Derby Shaw analyzes of the motives of murder are because Mattice the great contributor to the political campaign of the incumbent president broke the environmental law relating to the operational of oil drilling which caused pelicans were in the brink if extinction because they were

contaminated by DDT and other pesticides for thirty years. While the two justices Jensen and Rosenberg handled the case of violation of environmental law of Mattice to Court of Appeals in New Orleans.

4.2 Independence, Creativity, Spontaneity

It means that A person freely to choose what they want and to create their minds. While these people are able to follow generally accepted social expectations, they do not feel confined by these norms in their thoughts or behaviors. In addition, Self-actualizing individuals behave more spontaneously because they better understand their true motives, emotions, and abilities.

“Jensen and Rosenberg had in common.

Exactly.

Jensen generally protected the rights of criminal defendants.

Some notable exceptions.

He wrote 3 majority opinions protective of the environment.

And almost always supported tax protestors.

So they might have been assassinated by an insatiable tax collector?

As yet, I rule no one out.

Everyone is assuming the motive is hatred or revenge.

Or an attempt to influence

the social agenda of the court.

What if the issue involved

old-fashioned material greed?

A case that involves

a great deal of money”? (00:23:45-24:28)

From quotation above can be seen that the dialogue between Derby Saw and professor Thomas Callahan (Sam Shepard) discussed about the motives of the assassination of the two justices Jensen and Rosenberg. They were arguing about the motives, prof Thomas Callahan mentioned that they were killed by an

insatiable tax collector because Jensen generally protected the rights of criminal defendants and almost always supported tax protestors. Yet Derby Shaw mentioned that the background of assassination is the motive hatred and revenge and involved a great deal of money. From her statement it is true that she expressed better understanding about the motives of the murder. This is one of characteristics of self-actualized person.

Other quotation about independence is one of characteristics to be self-actualized person can be seen when Derby Shaw did everything in order to reveal the murderer of justices find the motives behind the assassination. Her effort can be seen from (00:23:31-45).

“Where've you been?
The library. I studied a printout
of the Supreme Court docket.
I even made a list of possible suspects.
And then threw it away
because they'd be obvious to everyone.
Then you looked for areas”.

From quotation above can be seen that Derby Shaw is an independent woman, she does everything in order to reveal the motives and criminals who killed two justices. Other quotation about her independency in collecting evidences about the murder can be seen when she went to court to find trial document concerning with the case.

“Can I help you?
I'd like to see this file, please.
Why?
It's public record, isn't it?
Semi-public.
Are you familiar with
the Freedom of Information Act?
This file has the pleading...
...and correspondence.
The rest is discovery and the trial.
When was the trial?
Last summer.

Went on for 2 months.
Where's the appeal?
Not perfected yet.
I think the deadline is August 1st.
So, who done it?
You have some obscure suspect
unknown
to the FBI and the CIA and...
...Secret Service
and 10,000 police departments?
I had one...” (00:24:35-25:06)

For the first time when Derby Shaw came to the court to get more trial data relating to the two justices murder, she argued with the clerk of the court. The clerk finally permit her to look up it after she mention about the Freedom Information Act. She did everything by herself including collecting supporting evidences relate to the case. Above quotation mention that she was an independent woman.

4.3 Acceptance of themselves and others

Self-actualizers are more tolerant of human weakness. They avoid judging other people or themselves, although they may experience some guilt about any personal deficiencies that they have been unable to overcome.

Not only do self-actualized people fully accept themselves; they also embrace other people for who they are. Other individuals are treated the same regardless of background, current status, or other socio-economic and cultural factors. This can be seen when Kalahan her professor and boy-friend was killed in a car bomb. (00:43). He was drunken and Derby Shaw tried to persuade to drive for him but he thought that he was capable enough to drive.

“Can I have the keys?
I'm perfectly capable of driving.
You've drunk too much.
Give me the keys.
Remember the Mashed Potato?

Give me the keys.
 - You're too young.
 - I know it.
 Do you remember the Fishback?
 - The Slide?
 - No. Please.
 - Please what?
 - Give me the keys.
 Give me the keys.
 I'll drive or I'll walk.
 You'll walk?
 Yes.
 Have a nice stroll.
 Miss Shaw!
 You take my breath away!
 Thomas!" (00:41:19-42:32)

From quotation above can be seen that Miss. Shaw tried to persuade him in order she drive the car because Thomas Kahan was drunken. He did not give the key to her and finally he came in the car by himself and when he tried to turn on the engine suddenly the car exploded and he was dead. Facing this condition she was very sad. Her behavior of accepting her professor or boy-friend died incudes one of characteristics of self-actualization.

4.4 A Problem- centered outlook, rather than a centered outlook

Self-actualizers tend to have a consuming mission in life that occupies much their time and energy. It is often motivated by a strong sense of personal ethics and responsibility. They enjoy applying their problem-solving skills to real-world situations and like helping other people improve their own lives.

"Can I help you?
 I'd like to see this file, please.
 Why?
 It's public record, isn't it?
 Semi-public.
 Are you familiar with
 the Freedom of Information Act?
 This file has the pleading...
 ...and correspondence.
 The rest is discovery and the trial.
 When was the trial?
 Last summer.

Went on for 2 months.
 Where's the appeal?
 Not perfected yet.
 I think the deadline is August 1st.
 So, who done it?
 You have some obscure suspect
 unknown
 to the FBI and the CIA and...
 ...Secret Service
 and 10,000 police departments?
 I had one..." (00:24:35-25:06)

Other problem centered out look can be seen from the quotation below when Derby Shaw and Gray talked about Mattice appealed in New Orleans Court.

"It takes 7 years for the pelican suit to go to trial in Lake Charles.
 The 3-man jury, caring less about the pelicans than jobs...
 ...votes in favor of Mattiece.
 But the judge rules to keep the injunction against drilling because...
 ...he thinks Green Fund has proven its point about the pelican...
 ...a federally-protected species, and that it will appeal.
 What's the lawsuit's status?
 From the trial level...
 ...it will be appealed to the Court of Appeals in New Orleans in a month.
 Any idea what the court will do?
 It could be reversed.
 Then the fun starts. If either side is unhappy with the court...
 ...they can appeal to the Supreme Court.
 From today, how long would it take for a decision by the Supreme Court?" (01:32:29-33:28).

4.5 Enjoyment of Life

While self-actualized people have concrete goals, they do not see things as simply a means to an end. The journey toward achieving a goal is just as important and enjoyable as actually accomplishing the goal.

In this characteristic is her journey toward achieving her goal namely to reveal the case such as how she collected some evidences from the court about the minutes of trial on

environmental case of Mattice, how she met Verheek who was finally killed by Khamel. Before he could kill her, he was shot and killed by an unknown agent. Verheek was the only person who knew the brief because he got from Prof. Callahan, who was killed in the car bomb. The characteristic of an actualized person can be seen when Derby Shaw discussed with Mr. Gray Grantham about the illegal business of the Mantice

“He’s made and lost several fortunes drilling oil in Louisiana. In 1979...
 ...his oil company punched some holes in Terrebonne Parish and hit oil. A lot of oil.
 He needed governmental permission...
 ...to dredge a channel through the marshlands to get the oil out.
 Enter Mattiece,
 the great campaign contributor...
 ...and as night follows day...
 ...government permission to gouge through the endangered marshes.
 Mattiece is that close to at least a billion dollars...
 ...when Green Fund...
 ...an obscure environmental outfit...
 ...trots down to the U.S. District court in Lafayette and files a lawsuit...
 ...to stop the entire operation.
 Of course, Mattiece spares no expense to win the lawsuit.
 I don’t think there’s a top law firm between Houston and New Orleans...
 ...that he hasn’t hired.” (01:30:21-31:29).

4.6 A Good Sense of Humor

Self-actualized individuals generally have a thoughtful sense of humor. They are able to enjoy the humor in situations and laugh at themselves, but they do not ridicule or make fun at the expense of another person's feelings. In this film the main character did not have good sense of humor. Thus this point cannot be found in this film.

5 CONCLUSION

5.1 Conclusion

As the main character of Pelican Brief film, Derby Shaw has some motives or background in fulfilling her self-actualization needs. They are first an accurate perception of reality as she is free of unwarranted optimism, pessimism, and other defensive distortions of reality. She is also able to evaluate people and events with considerable accuracy. Second she is independence, creativity and spontaneity. She is free to choose what she wants and creates her mind. While she is able to follow generally accepted social expectations, she does not feel confined by these norms in her thoughts or behaviors. In addition, she behaves more spontaneously because she better understands her true motives, emotions, and abilities. Third is acceptance of herself and others. In this case she is more tolerant of human weakness. She avoids judging other people or herself. She also embraces other people for who they are. Other individuals are treated the same regardless of background, current status, or other socio-economic and cultural factors. Fourth is a problem-centered outlook, rather than a self-centered outlook. She tends to have a consuming mission in life that occupies much of their time and energy. It is often motivated by a strong sense of personal ethics and responsibility. She enjoys applying her problem-solving skills to real-world situations and likes helping other people improve their own lives. Fifth is enjoyment of life. In this case she does not see things as simply a means to an end. The journey toward achieving a goal is just as important and enjoyable as actually accomplishing the goal. Sixth is a good sense

of Humor. As a students of Law faculty she is an individual with a little sense of humor

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