

MOTIVATION THEORY THROUGH MASLOW'S HIERARCHY OF NEEDS IN *LIMITLESS*

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ABSTRAK

Film *Limitless* adalah sebuah film fiksi ilmiah garapan Neil Burger yang menceritakan seorang pemuda di New York yang nyaris jadi gelandangan karena kehilangan pekerjaannya. Bahkan kekasihnya pun meninggalkannya karena tidak banyak yang bisa diharapkan dari pemuda ini. Tetapi ia kemudian bertemu dengan pil yang mengubah seluruh hidupnya. Pil ini membuatnya menjadi orang yang sangat cerdas melebihi manusia manapun. Ia bukan hanya bisa mengembalikan kehidupannya yang sudah hancur itu dengan kecerdasannya, bahkan ia juga mengejar mimpinya dan menjadi kandidat Senator of New York.

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk melihat bagaimana motivasi pemuda ini dengan kecerdasannya memenuhi segala kebutuhannya dan berusaha meraih mimpinya melalui hirarki kebutuhan yang dikemukakan oleh Maslow.

Hasil analisis menunjukkan bahwa hirarki kebutuhan Maslow benar-benar terbukti dalam film ini. Dari lima level yang dikemukakan oleh Maslow, pemuda ini benar-benar memulai dari level pertama (*basic physical needs*) sampai level kelima (*self-actualization needs*). Ia mulai dari seorang yang bangkrut dan nyaris menjadi gelandangan sampai pada akhirnya menjadi seorang kandidat Senator of New York.

1. Introduction

People cannot deny the truth that every person in this planet has something that he desires in his life. Some desires big things, but others, maybe, only want to stay alive. Even though it is only a desire to stay alive (do not want anything else), but it is also a desire, a need. Maslow describes that there are conscious and unconscious desires. Both conscious and unconscious desires also have a relation between them (Maslow, 1994: 28).

Motivation is not very easy to define, but basically it has two main theories, impetus and stimulus theory. Impetus theory focuses on surviving needs such as hunger and shelter. Then, stimulus theory is more complex. Stimulus theory is more to psychological needs such as love or fulfilling a dream (Meier, 2004: 86).

Maslow's hierarchy of needs has five levels of needs that represent both impetus and stimulus theory. It is such a combination of them. The first two levels are about impetus theory and the other three levels are stimulus theory. The five levels are physiological, safety, love and belonging, esteem, and self-actualization. So that it would be very helpful to understand more about motivation through Maslow's hierarchy of needs.

Obviously, according to the five levels of human needs above, human desires all over the world are basically similar. Various desires occur because of the difference of the culture of

each tribe or nation (Maslow, 1994: 29). Two different cultures can give two different ways of fulfilling a particular needs.

Limitless released on March 18, 2011 was directed by Neil Burger. It can be a suitable object for discussion to understand the concept of motivation through Maslow's hierarchy of needs among the American.

2. Methodology

In collecting and analyzing the data, the writer uses library research. Semi states that library research is analyzing the object inside the researcher's work room (Semi, 1993:7). The sources are any library materials correlated with the subject analyzed. It means that all of the data is collected from books, reviews, films, and other supporting references. There are two kinds of data here; main data which is film entitled *Limitless* directed by Neil Burger, and supporting data. Supporting data are collected from the books and articles from the internet related to the film and theory.

In this study, the discussion is divided into intrinsic and extrinsic aspects. The writer uses exponential and psychological approach in analyzing the data. Guerin (1992: 197) states, "Exponential approach deals with the inclusiveness of the term suggest at once the several meanings of motif, image, symbol, and archetype." Exponential approach will help the writer to analyze the intrinsic aspects of the film. Intrinsic aspects cover the narrative elements which construct the film such as theme, plot, setting, and etc. and cinematographic elements such as camera angle, lightning effects, etc.

Moreover, to analyze the extrinsic aspect, the writer uses psychological approach to understand the motive of the main character, Edward Morra. Semi (1993: 79) explains, "Extrinsic aspect through psychological approach is needed to discuss issues related to mental health issues; ideals, aspirations, desires, philosophy of life, obsession, and others."

3. Theoretical Framework

3.1 Intrinsic Element

Intrinsic aspect is what builds the work itself. Since the object of the study is film, intrinsic aspect consists of two sub aspects; narrative and cinematographic aspect. Narrative aspect constructs the story of the film. There are 4 elements to discuss here; plot, characterization, theme, and setting. To analyze the film cinematographically, the writer uses two approaches; camera distance and angle and *mise-en-scene*. Camera distance refers to the distance between the camera and the object in the frame. Object in a film is commonly a person, so that the distance is technically measured in the scale of a person's gesture. Then *mise-en-scene* is every element that we see in the scene. It is also divided into three parts; lighting effects, sounds, and costume and make up.

3.2 Extrinsic Element

Maslow shows us that there are five levels of human needs. The needs is placed hierarchically starting with the most basic needs. At any level, there should be satisfaction levels experienced before the person is motivated to meet the needs at the next level (Meier, 2004:89).

3.2.1 Physical Needs

On the basis of the hierarchy, there is physical needs. There are basic needs such as air, food, and water. If these needs are not met, a man cannot survive (Meier, 2004:90). There is no doubt that physical needs are the strongest needs. If these needs are unfulfilled, all other needs may become nonexistent or be pushed into the background. It means that a man who always lack of anything, physical needs is his strongest motivation. A man who lack of food, security, love, and honor may prefers food more than anything (Maslow, 1994: 45).

3.2.2 Security Needs

When the physical needs are met, then new needs such as safety, welfare, protection, freedom of fear, and order and laws will come up. Those needs are categorized as security needs. To some degree, there is must be a protection from the environment. Individuals at this level often seek out a protector, or stronger people on whom they depend. They who have no shelter, for example, tend not to be interested in more advanced types of needs such as luxury (Meier, 2004:90).

3.2.3 Needs of Love and Belonging

People find these needs in our desires to marry, have a family, be a part of a community, a member of a church, a brother in the fraternity or even a part of a gang. Sense of love and belonging is essential for a full life. Basically humans are social creatures that live in groups. They need to be acknowledged by the others and to be a part of the society. It seems almost impossible that human can live with himself (Meier, 2004:90).

3.2.4 Esteem Needs

Maslow describes two versions of esteem needs, a lower one and a higher one. The lower one is the need for the respect of others, the need for status, fame, glory, recognition, attention, reputation, appreciation, dignity, even dominance. The higher form involves the need for self-respect, including such feelings as confidence, competence, achievement, mastery, independence, and freedom. It is noted as the higher one because, unlike respect from others, once a man has self-respect, it is harder to lose (Maslow, 1994: 55). Nevertheless, thwarting these needs produces feelings of inferiority, weakness, and helplessness.

3.2.5 Self-actualization Needs

Although all those four levels needs are already fulfilled, human often, not always, have a feeling of anxiety or unsatisfied. This feeling will keep growing unless he does something, individually, fit with him. He has to be what he meant to be; musician needs to compose music or a singer needs to sing a song. These refer to the need to find self-fulfillment and realize one's unique potential (Maslow, 1994: 57). This level is only achieved by a few people who are characterized by a peak experience. Peak experience is a condition which marks that the person is already fully developed (Meier, 2004:91). Meier also adds that the qualities of self-actualized individual are a non-hostile sense of humor, intimate personal relationships, acceptance of self and others, spontaneity and simplicity, freshness of appreciation, more peak experiences, democratic values, independence (Meier, 2004:92).

4. Discussion

Analyzing the plot is very helpful to understand Eddie's motivation through Maslow's hierarchy of needs. In analyzing the film, the film is divided into six parts. The first part is the introduction. But the second part up to the sixth part, each part represents each level of the five levels of Maslow's hierarchy of needs. Maslow has given a clear picture of the theory about motivation through Hierarchy of needs. And now we will see how this theory works in the character Eddie in the *Limitless*.

4.1 Physical Needs

This part is the second part, when Eddie meets Vernon. The pill that Vernon gave has turned around his life for six hour. He was able to overcome anger of apartment owner's wife. Then he finished the first 40 pages of his book. In the next day, he found Vernon has been murdered in his place. His first pill marks this part.

In this part, there is no scene where Eddie looks for food or water which are essential needs to live. This is probably because Eddie was not really in need of food, or in other words, has been satisfied. But in this first part right after he has the superhuman power (the first pill effect), he defends himself against the wife of the landlord with his intelligence and, unconsciously, he eagerly looks for sex. In the next scene he helps her with her paper and has sex with her.

Some people may wonder why Maslow put needs of sex in the physical needs. Maslow describes in his book that it is true that desire to have sex has many motives behind it, besides sexual needs itself, such as needs of love, affection, and etc. But, Maslow clearly states that love is not a synonym of sex. He says that sex can be classified as pure physical needs (Maslow, 1994: 55).

4.2 Security Needs

After he found a stock of pills in Vernon place, his life is completely turned around. He makes some money from gambling and makes some rich friends. He climbs to the higher status and starts thinking to play in stocks market. He plays well and makes 2 million dollar in only a week. He also gets Lindy back. This is the third part of the story.

In this part, marked when he is able to cope with Valerie, Eddie started to solve the problem one by one. And it can be seen how he immediately tried to work when the pill open his mind widely, because he needs money to stay alive. Unconsciously the next thing he does after getting the power is to work and earn money.

Maslow notes that healthy adults largely have fulfilled need for security. Therefore, in the truest sense, the need for security no longer is an active motivator, especially in America where the state is to ensure the security of its citizens. (Maslow, 1994: 50-51) In circumstances like these, we can only perceive the disclosure of security requirements on such phenomena as, for example, the desire for good jobs and stay and the desire to have a savings account and a variety of insurance.

4.3 Needs of Love and Belonging

He starts to feel the side effects of consuming the pills. He tries stop consuming them, but he fails. Melissa, his ex-wife, helps him to stop consuming them. And his meeting with Van Loon boosts up his fame. And later he realizes that a mysterious man, later is known as Atwood's man, is following him. The Russian mafia also wants the pill, they also threaten him. Realizing that his life is no longer safe, he moves to a 'stronghold-like' apartment. Lindy also figures out his secret about the pills. This is the fourth part.

Now he has fulfilled basic physical and security needs. When physical and safety needs are met, it would appear the need for love, compassion, and sense of belonging. So this time people will feel the absence of a friend, lover, wife, or child as needed. He needs a loving relationship with the people in general, i.e., somewhere in the group or family so that he would try harder to get it (Maslow, 1994: 53).

Eddie starts to make friends in this level. He easily blends to the people. Obviously, he approaches higher social class community. He meets Kevin who later becomes his assistant in stock market. The script below is what Eddie thought while he hangs out with his rich friends in a beach somewhere out of New York. Later he begins to think to contact Lindy. It seems having friends and belonging to a community are not enough. He desires settle down and start a family. He used to have a family before with Melissa Gant, but the marriage does not work really well. Then he tries to start over again with Lindy.

4.4 Esteem Needs

When it seems Eddie gets everything anyone would ever want, like friends and money, there is still a thing that feels missing. Eddie desires fame and prestige. Maslow called it the need for esteem. Probably it is not Eddie's conscious intention to be famous. He only intended to get a great job by working to Van Loon, known as the person in power in the stock market. But we can see that Eddie was enjoying the situation, and it also became one contribution how Lindy came back to him. At first, Lindy dumped him because he failed in his job and does not have a promising future.

4.5 Self-actualization Needs

The last part, the falling action, is a year later. He is running for New York senator. He has completely stopped consuming them without losing his smart brain. He decreases the dose of the pills step by step and finally completely independent of the addiction of the pills.

He is also now completely independent of Van Loon. In the last conversation with Van Loon, Van Loon tries to use him as the senator and negotiates him with the supply of the pills. Van Loon has bought the company that supplies Eddie's needs of pills. He never thought that Eddie has quit taking the pills. But in the end Eddie overcomes the situation and quits working for Van Loon. He is now a completely independent man.

At this point, Eddie is truly independent, not needing anything else, even the pills. He has mostly fulfilled all of the four levels of needs. But, Maslow sees all these needs as essentially survival needs. Even love and esteem are needed for the maintenance of health. Although all those four levels needs are already fulfilled, human often, not always, have a feeling of

anxiety or unsatisfied. This feeling will keep growing unless he does something, individually, fit with him. He has to be what he meant to be; musician needs to compose music or a singer needs to sing a song. These refer to the need to find self-fulfillment and realize one's unique potential (Maslow, 1994: 57)

Eddie feels that this is what he really wants. First, he becomes very special where there are only a few people who are capable to be a senator. And second, as a senator, he does not need to work for Van Loon anymore. It means that he can control himself completely without any interception. He is fully developed now. He has all the power, achievement, adequacy, advantages and capabilities, confidence in facing the world as well as independence and freedom, and prestige, status, fame, and dignity.

5. Conclusion

The five levels of Maslow's hierarchy of needs work on Eddie. Since the very beginning of the film until the end, Eddie has fulfilled all of the five needs. He climbs from the lowest needs to the top step by step.

Every step he takes represents all of five levels of Maslow's hierarchy of needs. First he satisfies his sexual desire which is the physical needs. Then he cleans his apartment and starts his book. Later he searches for more pills as a guarantee for his superhuman power. This part represents the needs of security. He fulfills the needs of love and belonging by making friend and rebuilds the relationship with Lindy. Later while he works for Van Loon to gain money and fame indicated that he is fulfilling his needs of esteem. Last, he runs for Senator of New York as his self-actualization.

The need of being a senator as a self-actualization will come up when the lower needs is fulfilled. He needs to fulfill the lower level so that the motivation to move to the higher level will come up and he could reach the top level.

In conclusion, Eddie has dreams or wishes. But, the motivation to reach it will grow only when the lower needs is fulfilled. The higher level he can reach, the closer he is to be what he really wants in life.

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