THE HIERARCHY OF HUMAN NEEDS OF RIGGAN
THOMSON IN BIRDMAN FILM

A Thesis
Submitted to Adab and Humanities Faculty
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Strata One

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ABSTRACT


The aim of this research is to find the way Riggan Thomson fulfills his hierarchy of needs using hierarchy of human needs theory by Abraham Harold Maslow. Moreover, the researcher identifies the self-actualization’s characteristics of Riggan Thomson during fulfilling his hierarchy of human needs. The researcher uses qualitative analysis technique in analyzing Riggan Thomson in *Birdman* film by close reading the theory and watching the film, then identifying the hierarchy of human needs of Riggan.

The result of the study shows that Riggan Thomson could fulfill his hierarchy of human needs, namely physiological needs, safety needs, love and belongingness needs, esteem needs, and self-actualization needs. Moreover, Riggan has six self-actualization’s characteristics: clear perception of reality, focus on problems outside themselves, spontaneity, simplicity and naturalness, sense of detachment and the need for privacy, creativeness and originality, and resistance to enculturation.

Keywords: Hierarchy of Human Needs, Birdman, Riggan Thomson, self-actualization’s characteristics.
APPROVAL SHEET

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LEGALIZATION

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The thesis entitled above has been defended before the Letters and Humanities Faculty’s Examination Committee on June 9th, 2017. It has already been accepted as a partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of strata one.

Jakarta, June 9th, 2017

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person nor material which to a substantial extent has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma of the university or other institute of higher learning, except where due acknowledgment has been made in the text.

Jakarta, 4 April 2017

Rego Hardyno
ACKNOWLEDGMENT

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of Study

Film is a media that gives depiction of a real world, a medium of communication via audio-visual to convey a message for a group of people or individuals. The film also serves as a representation of real life, history, and culture which is presented in the form of live image (motion picture). Film and literature shares the same elements and communication methods. Films communicate through imagery, metaphor, and symbols like a poem. Visual and verbal, visual through actions and gestures, verbal through dialogue. And like as a novel it has space and time (Boggs and Petrie 3). One of the most important elements in the film is the characters. Characters, whether developed by literary authors or screenwriters, are creations. Authors may pattern a character after a living person, but they are just as likely to develop a character to fit a particular set of functions, both physically and psychologically (Ferrell 43). According to Boggs and Petrie, a character in a film must be visible, understandable, and deserve to be noticed (Boggs and Petrie 60). A character in the film is a fictional embodiment of human in the real world. The fictional character showing various characteristic and behavior associated with human needs. *Birdman* shows the main character who have unique characteristic which writer interested in analyzing.
Birdman is a drama film directed by Alejandro Gonzalez Inárritu. The film stars Michael Keaton, Zach Galifianakis, Edward Norton, Andrea Riseborough, Amy Ryan, Emma Stone and Naomi Watts. The film won the Academy Award in 2015 for Best Motion Picture of the Year, Best Achievement in Directing, Best Original Screenplay, and Best Achievement in Cinematography.\(^1\) The story is about Riggan Thompson once known quite well actor as an iconic superhero called The Birdman had recently turned down a fourth installment of the franchise. Now washed up, he attempts to reinvent himself as a director by staging a new adaptation of a Raymond Carver short story called What We Talk about When We Talk about Love in Broadway. The events leading up to the disaster Saturday night premiere prove after another as the original lead actor is injured while on set and Riggan intends to find a replacement. But the replacement actor, Mike Shiner proves to be exactly who he needs. Riggan has hard time juggling between the set, his replacement actor, his equally washed up daughter Samantha, face the New York critic who threatens to shut down the play, and a host of other disasters that prevent a proper staging of the play.

According to the synopsis above, Birdman is film which telling about how a man pursue his life to fulfills his esteem need by being an actor in Broadway to finally reaches his self-actualization. Riggan Thomson is an actor. Once he had a career on Hollywood, but he does not achieve his self-esteem as a Hollywood actor. Riggan feels unsatisfied for being in Hollywood. Although, he feels his acting as

*Birdman* gets a lot of appreciation from other people and gain popularity but he did not appreciate his own self in that role. So he quit and attempt the real acting carrier by creating the play adaptation of Raymond Carver’s *What We Talk About When We Talk About Love*. This case indicates that Riggan still searching how to fulfill his esteem needs and to analyze the way Riggan uses to fulfill his needs the researcher uses Hierarchy of needs theory by Abraham Maslow. Maslow says that if we want to get a healthy psychological life, we should learn from the best person in the world. Moreover, life gives needs which motivated to learn the best thing in human life (Schultz 87). People who have a healthy psychological life can reach their self-actualization. In this case, Maslow proposes, self-actualization is the final stage of the hierarchy of needs. We need to complete and fulfill the four-previous level to get to self-actualization (Schultz 93).

*Birdman* film as part of literary works related to psychology. According to Wellek and Warren literary psychology has four possibility meaning, there are: a) analyzing the psychological author study as type or individual, b) analyzing the creativity process, c) analyzing the types and psychological rules which are applied in fictional characters about the psychiatric literature, d) analyzing the effects of reader’s psychology (Wellek and Warren 81). Nevertheless, the researcher wants to analyze the third point and based on the film, the researcher is interested to analyze the main character in the *Birdman* film—Riggan Thompson—using Maslow’s theory. As Riggan feels failed in achieving his self-esteem in his career as an actor in Hollywood, then he tries to maintain his esteem in another way, in this case is in Broadway. The researcher feels need to analyze the hierarchy of needs
of Riggan. Whether he can maintain his esteem and steps to the self-actualization or he only fulfills on certain stage.

B. Focus of the Study

In determining the scope of the discussion by focusing the study only analyze the character of Riggan Thompson who has a problem with his unique characteristic which trying to reach his self-actualization.

C. Research Question

The researcher tries to identify, understand and explain the hierarchy of needs, motivation, and self-actualization of Riggan Thompson in Birdman film based on following question:

How does Riggan Thompson fulfill his esteem needs to finally achieve his self-actualization?

D. Significance of Study

The researcher expects the presence of this study can enrich the study of literature relating to the theory of psychoanalysis as applied to literary works such as films. Provide an understanding of the basic foundations of psychoanalysis Abraham Maslow's theory of hierarchy of needs, and self-actualization as the last stage of hierarchy of needs through Riggan Thompson character in the Birdman film. Moreover, can be used as a reference in the film studies using psychoanalytical approach.
E. Research Methodology

1. The Objective of Research

To know the way Riggan fulfill his esteem needs to achieve his self-actualization.

2. The Method of Research

The researcher uses descriptive qualitative method. Qualitative research is research who rely on non-verbal data and other numerical as the basis for analysis and problem solving are being studied, such as content analysis, discourse analysis, and research naturalistic (Farkhan 2). Stokes says that qualitative research is the name given to a range of research paradigms that are primarily concerned with meaning and interpretation. These methods are more typical of the humanities have been developed for the study of literature (Stokes 3). Moreover, Bodgan and Taylor (1975) in Moleong, says that “qualitative methodology as a research procedure that produces descriptive data in form of written words or spoken of people and behaviors that can be observed (Moleong 4).” In addition, the descriptive research is research by identifying or describing a problem to get to the truth. Data for the study were taken from the scene and quote the words in the film.

3. The Technique of Data Analysis

Collecting data to be analyzed using the approach taken by Psychology. The data used is the text dialog, and photo scenes footage in the Birdman film then analyzed using self-actualization theory proposed by Abraham Maslow.
4. The Instrument of the Research

The instrument of the research is the researcher himself as the subject to analyze the data in the form of text dialogue and scenes in the *Birdman*.

5. The Unit of Analysis

Unit of analysis in this research is *Birdman* film released on 2015, directed by Alejandro Gonzalez Inárritu.
CHAPTER II
THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

A. Previous Research

These are two thesis analysis which are analyzing the study of hierarchy of human needs and Birdman film. First is Hierarchy of Expressive Culture in Birdman by Dhania Putri Sarahtika from Faculty of Humanities, Gadjah Mada University Yogyakarta in 2016. This research attempts to identify the hierarchy of expressive culture portrayed in Birdman and its reflection to the present society in the United States. The object of the study is limited to the textual material, which is the screenplay written by Alejandro G. Inarritu, in collaboration with Nicolas Giacobone, Alexander Dinelaris, Jr., and Armando Bo, and its social context. This study applies a sociological approach by Alan Swingewood to see the work's relation to the pertaining society. More specifically, the theory used to determine the hierarchy is Lawrence W. Levin's cultural hierarchy. The researcher firstly makes categorization based on Levine's theory, followed by analysis of the challenges to the hierarchy; each process includes comparison between the findings and the reality in the present American society to see their resemblance. Based on the results, the highbrow/lowlbrow dichotomy manifested in Birdman is constructed of theatre as highbrow and film as lowbrow. However, there are challenges to the dichotomy, such as the pretense behind theatre as a highbrow, the negative effects of theatre on the main character, and the ideas of "relevance" and social media's
influence. Thus, _Birdman_ shows that the hierarchy of expressive culture still exists in the American society, yet it is not as rigid as it was in the past.

Second is *The Hierarchy of Human Needs of the Major Character in Film The Devil Wears Prada* by Asti Nurtasiya from Faculty of Adab and Humanities, State Islamic University Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta in 2010. Her research is aimed at finding out the main character self-actualization of “the Devil Wears Prada” film. The writer analyzes the character of the main character. This characteristic influences the character herself in fulfilling the needs. The writer identifies the character’s characteristics and problems of the main character which revealed along her journey to get her self-actualization. The method which is used by the writer in this research is descriptive qualitative. The data are analyzed by watching the movie, analyzed the dialogue and understanding the dialogue and the motion picture of the movie. This research discussed characteristics of main character, Andrea Sachs, which influenced herself in fulfilling the needs. Her characteristic took an important role so that she can fulfill the needs that lead her to self-actualization. Hierarchy of human needs are classified into five level, they are which is physiological needs, safety needs, love and belongingness, esteem needs, and self-actualization needs. Even there are some obstacle that she faces but she can get through it and fulfil the needs from the lowest level to the highest-level so that the main character finally accomplishes all levels and get self-actualization.

There are some differences between these two researches above compared to this research. In the first thesis, Asti Nurtasiya used Abraham Maslow theory to analyze the main character in film The Devil Wears Prada. Moreover, the second
thesis, Dhania Putri Sarahtika used *Birdman* film as a corpus with hierarchy of expressive culture theory. In this research, researcher chooses *Birdman* as the corpus to be analyze using Abraham Maslow’s Hierarchy of Human Needs theory.

**B. Hierarchy of Need Theory**

Abraham Maslow is a humanistic psychologist. He develops a theory of personality that has influenced a number of different fields, including education (honolulu.hawaii.edu). This theory accurately describes many realities of personal experiences. Maslow had an interest in compiling about how person can fulfill their own needs so that they can reach self-actualization. These actualization needs organized all others into a hierarchy of needs.

Hierarchy of needs theory is part of the personality theory of Abraham Maslow. His personality theory has variously been called humanistic theory, transpersonal theory, the third force in psychology, the fourth force in personality, needs theory, and self-actualization theory. However, Maslow referred to it as a holistic-dynamic theory because it assumes that the whole person is constantly being motivated by one need or another and that people have the potential to grow toward psychological health, that is, *self-actualization*. To attain self-actualization, people must satisfy lower level needs such as hunger, safety, love, and esteem (Gregory and Feist 281). Maslow stated that these needs or values are related to each other in a hierarchical and development way, in an order of strength and of priority. Safety is a more prepotent, or stronger, more pressing, more vital need than love, for instance, and the need for food is usually stronger than either. Furthermore, all these basic needs may be considered to be simply steps along the path to general
self-actualization, under which all basic needs can be subsumed (Maslow 153). Only after they are relatively satisfied in each of these needs can they reach self-actualization (Gregory and Feist 281).

Maslow described a person who can reach self-actualization as a person who can give the best from themselves and maximize all the talent that a person has. A person who can reach a self-actualization is a best example of a human. Maslow called this as “the growing tip” (Goble 48). Humanistic psychologists believe that every person has a strong desire to realize his or her full potential, to reach a level of self-actualization. To prove that humans are not simply blindly reacting to situations, but trying to accomplish something greater, Maslow studied mentally healthy individuals instead of people with serious psychological issues. This enabled him to discover that people experience “peak experience.” High points in life, when the individual is harmony with himself and his surroundings. Self-actualized people can have many peak experiences throughout a day while others have those experiences less frequently.

Maslow thought that every person has needs that they have to fulfill to get a self-actualization but only small percent that have ability to get the self-actualization. Most of it caused by the person itself. Sometimes they are blinded by themselves. They do not realize their truly ability. It can change if we can change our behavior, so that a person can develop their ability that can lead them to self-actualization. The most universal and general characteristic of people who can actualization her or himself is through their ability in see problem clearly. Although this theory can be used by observing since children, but this only can be applying
to adult. This theory cannot be applying to children that usually still static and tend to change their mind.

Maslow argues that human needs are divided into five clusters in hierarchy which is Psychological Needs, and Self Actualization Needs. These five will leads a person to a self-actualization which can make a person’s life better. According to Maslow, human motivation can best be studied by observing human rather than using animal. His observation led him to the conclusion in terms of hierarchy of human needs. Maslow’s hierarchy of needs is often depicted as a pyramid consists of five levels which described as follow:

![Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Pyramid](simplypsychology)

The first four levels are considered deficiency or deprivation needs (D-Needs) in that their lack of satisfaction causes a deficiency that motivates people to meet these needs. The highest level is self-actualization, or the self-fulfillment. In this case the behavior is not driven or motivated by deficiencies but rather one’s
desire for personal growth and the need to become all the things that a person is capable of becoming (learning-theories).

1. Physiological Needs

Physiological needs are certain needs of foods, water, air, sleep, and sex. The fulfilment all of those needs are important for life sustainability. Therefore, those needs are the strongest needs (Schultz 91). If a person were deprived of all needs, the physiological ones would come first in the person’s search for satisfaction. If need such as hunger or thirst are not adequately being met, the needs above them on the hierarchy are pushed into the background in terms of controlling behavior.

2. Safety Needs

When the physiological needs are fulfilled, then appear safety needs. These safety needs such guarantee, stability, protection, order, and without fear condition (Schultz 91). For example, a young child may seek reassurance and protection after being frightened by a sudden loud noise or injury. Or an adult in the grip of safety needs may pursue a tenured professorship. Amass substantial saving account, or constantly prefer the familiar and routine to the unknown. Although the safety needs help us to avoid severe pain and injury both physical and non-physical.

Maslow in *Motivation and Personality* stated that safety needs can become very urgent on the social scene whenever there are real threats to law, to order, to the authority of society. The threat of chaos or of nihilism can be expected in most human beings to produce a regression from any higher needs to the more prepotent
safety needs (Maslow 43). A common, almost an expectable reaction, is the easier acceptance of dictatorship or military rule. This tends to be true for all human beings, including healthy ones, since they too will tend to respond to danger with realistic regression to the safety need level, and will prepare to defend themselves. But it seems to be most true of people who are living near the safety line. They are particularly disturbed by threats to authority, to legality, and to representatives of the law (Maslow 43).

3. Belongingness and Love Needs

Once the physiological and safety needs have been fulfilled, the belongingness and love needs come to the forefront motivator. The individual now hungers for affectionate relationship with friend, his/her love or spouse, and/offspring (Robert 207). People who have had their love and belongingness needs adequately satisfied from early years do not panic when denied love. These people have confidence that they are accepted by those who are important to them, so when other people reject them, they do not feel devastated. Children need love in order to grow psychologically, and their attempts to satisfy this need are usually straightforward and direct. Adults also need love, but their attempts to attain it are sometimes disguised. These adults often engage in self-defeating behaviors, such pretending to be aloof from other people or adopting a cynical, cold, and calloused manner in their interpersonal relationship. They may give appearance of self-sufficiency and independence, but in reality, they have strong need to be accepted and loved by other people. Maslow states that human beings need for friends, a sweetheart, children, affectionate relationships in general, even a sense of
community. For example, in our day to day life, we exhibit these needs in our desires to marry, have a family and be a part of community (Yahya 24).

4. Esteem Needs

Esteem needs is striving act to achieve self-confidence and mastery of the environment, and to obtain recognition and appreciation from others (Robert 207). However, these esteem needs usually act as motivators only if the three lower types have been satisfied. Maslow identified two levels of esteem needs—reputation and self-esteem. Reputation is the perception of the prestige, recognition, or fame a person has achieved in the eyes of others, whereas self-esteem is a person’s own feelings of worth and confidence (Gregory and Feist 283). Self-esteem is based on more than reputation or prestige; it reflects a “desire for strength, for achievement, for adequacy, for mastery and competence, for confidence in the face of the world, and for independence and freedom”. In other words, self-esteem is based on real competence and not merely on others opinions. Once people meet their esteem needs, they on the threshold of self-actualization, the highest need recognized by Maslow.

5. Self-Actualization Needs

When lower level needs are satisfied, people proceed more or less automatically to the next level. However, once esteem needs are met, they do not always move to the level of self-actualization. Maslow assumed that self-actualization needs become potent whenever esteem needs have been met. However, during the 1960s, he realized that many of the young students at Brandeis
and other campuses around the country had all their lower needs gratified, including reputation and self-esteem, and yet they are not self-actualized because they did not achieve their full potential as a human being. Self-actualization needs include self-fulfillment, the realization of all potential, and desire to become creative in the full sense of the word (Gregory and Feist 284). People who have reached the level of self-actualization become fully human, satisfying needs that others merely glimpse or never view at all. They express their basic human needs and do not allow them to be suppressed by culture. Self-actualization people maintain their feelings of self-esteem even when scorned, rejected, and dismissed by other people. In other words, self-actualizers are not dependent on the satisfaction of either love or esteem needs.

C. Characteristics of Self-Actualizing People

Self-actualizing people are concerned with fulfilling their potential and with knowing and understanding their environment. In this state, they are not seeking to reduce tension, satisfy a deficiency, or strive for a specific object. Their goal is to enrich their lives by acting to increase tension to experience a variety of stimulating and challenging events. Because their lower order deficiency needs have been met (Schultz 317).

According to Maslow, he indicates that self-actualized people share certain characteristics, those are:


Self-actualized people perceive their world. Including other people, clearly and objectively, unbiased by prejudgments or preconceptions (Schultz 317).
2. An acceptance of themselves, others, and Nature.

Self-actualized people accept their strengths and weaknesses. They do not try to distort or falsify their self-image and they do not feel guilty about their failings. They also accept the weaknesses of other people and society in general (Schultz 317).

3. A Spontaneity, Simplicity, and Naturalness.

The behavior of self-actualized people is open, direct and natural. They rarely hide their feelings or emotions or play a role to satisfy society, although they may do so to avoid hurting other people. Self-actualized people are individualistic in their ideas and ideals but not necessarily unconventional in their behavior. They feel secure enough to be themselves without being overly assertive (Schultz 317).

4. Focus on problems outside themselves.

Self-actualized people have sense of mission, a commitment, to which they devote their energy. This dedication to a cause or vocation is a requirement for self-actualization. Self-actualized people find pleasure and excitement in their hard work. Though their intense dedication, self-actualized people are able to satisfy their metaneeds. For instance: a writer or scientist may search for truth, an artist for beauty, an attorney for justice. Self-actualized people do not undertake their tasks for money, fame, or power but rather to satisfy the metaneeds. Their commitment challenges and develops their abilities and helps define their sense of self (Schultz 319).
5. Sense of Detachment and the Need for Privacy

Self-actualized people can experience isolation without harmful effects and seem to need solitude more than other people who did not reach self-actualization. They depend on themselves instead of other people. This independence trait may make them seem aloof or unfriendly, but that is not their intent. They are simply more autonomous than most people and do not crave social support (Schultz 319).

6. A Freshness of Appreciation.

Self-actualized people have the ability to perceive and experience their environment with freshness, wonder, and awe. An experience may grow stale for someone who reach their self-actualization. They enjoy each recurrence as though it was the first. Weather a sunset, a painting, or a symphony, a baseball game or a birthday gift—all can be seen with delight. Self-actualized people appreciate what they have and take little for granted (Schultz 319).

7. Mystical or Peak Experiences

Self-actualized people know moments of intense ecstasy, unlike deep religious experience, that can occur with virtually any activity. Maslow called these events peak experience, during which the self is transcended and the person feels supremely powerful, confident, and decisive. Maslow wrote that a peak experience involves. Maslow in Schultz stated that a feeling of great ecstasy and wonder and awe, the loss of placing in time and space with, finally, the conviction that something extremely important and valuable had happened, so that the subject is transformed and strengthened (Schultz 320).
8. Social Interest.

Maslow adopted Alfred Adler’s concept of social interest to indicate the sympathy and empathy self-actualized persons have for all humanity. Although often irritated by the behavior of other people, self-actualized people feel a kinship with and an understanding of others as well as a desire to help them (Schultz 320).

9. Profound Interpersonal Relations.

Although their circle of friends is not large, self-actualized people have deep, lasting friendship. They tend to select as friends those with personal qualities similar to their own, just as we all choose as friends the people we find compatible. Self-actualized people often attract admirers or disciples. These relationships are usually one-sided; the admirer asks more of the self-actualized people is able or willing to give (Schultz 320).

10. Democratic Character Structure.

Self-actualized people are tolerant and accepting of the personality and behavior of others. They display no racial, religious, or social prejudice. They are willing to listen to and learn from anyone capable of teaching them and are rarely condescending (Schultz 320).

11. Creativeness and Originality.

Self-actualized people are highly creative and exhibit inventiveness and originality in their work and other facets of life. They are flexible, spontaneous, and willing to make mistake and learn from them. They are open and humble, in the
way children are before society teaches them to be embarrassed or shy about possibly doing something foolish (Schultz 320).

12. Resistance to Enculturation.

Self-actualized people are autonomous, independent, and self-sufficient. They feel free to resist social and cultural pressure to think or behave in a certain way. They do not openly rebel against cultural norms or social codes, but they are governed by their own nature rather than the strictures of society (Schultz 321).
CHAPTER III
RESEARCH FINDINGS

In this chapter, the researcher will analyze Riggan Thomson in *Birdman* film to know the way he fulfills his needs based on Abraham Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs theory. Furthermore, the researcher will analyze Riggan Thomson’s self-actualization characteristic.

A. The Hierarchy of Needs of Riggan Thomson

As in chapter 2, the hierarchy of human needs theory is divided into five level of needs—physiological, safety, love and belongingness, self-esteem, and self-actualization. In *Birdman* film, Riggan Thomson has already fulfilled his physiological, safety, love and belongingness needs. In this sub-chapter the researcher would like to explain a little about how Riggan fulfill this first three needs.

Maslow stated that the very basic of human needs is physiological needs. This needs consists of human hunger of food, thirst, and sex. Such needs are the strongest needs and must be fulfilled before the rest of other needs. There is a condition where the human cannot fulfill this needs a person will lose control over their own behavior and suffer anxiety. But when physiological needs are fulfilled he/her can proceed to the higher needs. In *Birdman* Riggan Thomson—is a quite prosperous person who own the staging of Raymond Carver adaptation play, *What We Talk About When We Talk About Love* in Broadway theatre, New York. He is
formerly as a main actor of fictional superhero film which had the same name of this film, *Birdman*.

The picture above depicts Riggan sits at his room, behind him there is a *Birdman* poster. His previous work is as a fictional superhero film. He gets a lot of attention and credits from this role until he feels unsatisfied and leaves the Hollywood to start a new carrier with his remaining popularity. From here, the researcher can conclude that Riggan physiological needs is already fulfilled because he has enough wealth such shelter, house, and money.

**Riggan**: So, what’s going on with you?

**Sylvia**: Me? Nothing. Everything’s the same I guess. I’m going back to teaching.

**Riggan**: I’m thinking about refinancing the Malibu house.

*(Birdman: 00:28:25 – 00:28:44)*

The dialogue shows that Riggan has a house in Malibu. He can afford to buy house in Malibu and invests that house for Sam. It proves that Riggan has
money and house. He also can fulfill his daily needs like foods and drinks in theater as seen in the picture below.

It can be seen from the scene above, he has a fridge filled with food and drink in his room that means he always has something to eat and drink anytime he wants. In physiological needs, there are not only the needs of food, shelter, and money but also the needs of sex. In this stage, Riggan can fulfill his needs of sex which can be seen in the picture below.
As the picture above explains that Riggan needs of sex can be fulfilled. Laura tells Riggan that she missed her two periods, in this scene the researcher can clearly say that Riggan and Laura have sex together. Even though he divorced with his wife it can be seen the fulfillment of sexual act is not a problem. From the explanation above, it is clearly that Riggan physiological needs are already fulfilled and does not have obstacle to fulfill this very basic needs.

Riggan physiological needs are no longer needed because he already fulfills them. Then comes the next higher needs, the safety needs. This safety needs include physical security, stability, dependency, protection, freedom of threatening forces such war, terrorism, illness, fear, anxiety, danger, chaos, and natural disasters. Then also law, order, and structure. In societies safety needs, can be fulfilled by the condition of peace without war and conflict. Furthermore, Riggan does not feel the physical threat, he is in the safe condition in which he does not experience war and natural disaster. He also apart from the chaos—living in an order society of New York City. His healthy is in the best condition which makes him feels safe from illness.
As in physiological needs, Riggan has money from his acting as Birdman in Hollywood. It means Riggan has no worry with his wealthy. When he moves to Broadway Riggan has no concern of lacking money because he still has money from the selling of preview ticket.

Jake: Good. That’s god. The, uh, money came through. I just have to transfer it to the account.

Riggan: Oh, that’s terrific...

Jake: Okay. Well, I’m going gonna do that. (He stares at Riggan who seems about to collapse). You know I’m proud of you, right? This took balls. And you did it.

(Birdman: 01:01:56 – 01:02:16)

The picture above is the scene when Riggan is desperate and almost gives up. Then Jake comes up and talks to Riggan. From the dialogue above Jake tells Riggan that their preview ticket sale is sold out so they have a lot of money through his account. In this case Riggan has enough money so he can relieve from insecurity of having financial problem. From the evidences data explained above the researcher concludes that Riggan safety needs are fulfilled and he can proceed to next higher needs, love and belongingness.
Once Riggan physiological and safety needs have been reasonably well satisfied, he attends to the needs for belongingness and love. These needs can be expressed through close relationship with friend, lover, or mate, or through social relationship formed within a group. The need to give and receive love can be satisfied in an intimate relationship with another person. Riggan, as a human, needs friends and family to be loved. His wife left him because he threw knife at her and an hour later he said to his wife the way much he loves her.

![Picture 6](image)

**Picture 6**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Riggan</th>
<th>: Why did we break up?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sylvia</td>
<td>: (Looks him in the eye) You threw a kitchen knife at me...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Riggan</td>
<td>: (Silenced)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sylvia</td>
<td>: ...and one hour later you were telling me how much you loved me. Just because I didn’t like that ridiculous comedy you did with Goldie Hawn didn’t mean I did not love you. But that’s what you always do. You confuse love with admiration.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*(Birdman: 00:30:56 – 00:31:15)*

The dialogue clearly explains even though Riggan made terrible mistake that ruin his marriage, his wife still loving him. Even though they are separated, she always supports Riggan in any condition. Moreover, Riggan has Sam, her daughter, who loves him and stays with him.
Nevertheless, love from is not enough to satisfy his love and belongingness. Here must have social bonding including the development of friendship, partnership, and group affiliation which is important component that synthesize to satiate social needs. Seeking meaning and connection with other human beings represents the core of social needs, and variety of types of relationships are needed to fully satisfy the love needs. Riggan has a strong friendship with Jake. They have been best friend for a long time since Riggan was in Hollywood.

![Picture 7](image)

**Picture 7**

**Jake**: Ralph will sue us. He will sue us and he has a case.

**Riggan**: Just make it go away. Look, you’re my attorney. You’re my producer. You’re my best friend. Now go out there and do what you were born to do.

*(Birdman: 00:07:15 – 00:07:30)*

The picture and dialogue above show that Jake is Riggan’s best friend, attorney, and producer all at once. Jake also acts as his advisor in managing the stage. When Riggan has a problem, Jake does his best to help Riggan out of his problem. Besides having friendship with Jake, as a stage director in his project Riggan fulfills all social bonding. He incorporates with his stage member which means he has a group
affiliation. From the explanation above, the researcher concludes that Riggan has already fulfill his physiological, safety, love and belongingness.

1. The Self-Esteem of Riggan Thomson

The love needs and belongingness needs of Riggan Thomson have been adequately met, now his esteem needs approach. This needs will be classified into two sets. First, the desire for strength, achievement, adequacy, mastery and competence, confidence in the face of the world, and independence and freedom. Second, the desire for reputation or prestige, status, fame and glory, dominance, recognition, attention, importance, dignity, or appreciation. Here the researcher settles that the first set is representing the self-esteem and the second set is representing the esteem from the other. Satisfaction of these two sets will lead to the feelings of self-confidence, worth, strength, capability, and adequacy, of being useful and necessary in the world. There is one condition if it is not fulfilled, Riggan will feel inferior, weak, and helpless.

Riggn feels unsatisfied while playing as a Birdman in Hollywood. His acting as birdman gets a lot of appreciation from other people. He gets self-esteem from other people because of his acting as birdman. It can be seen in the pictures below.
The scene above is when Riggan walks around the theater suddenly a man recognizes him as his reputation as birdman. Even though he gets a lot of appreciation from people, he still feels not fulfilled his self-esteem from inside yet. While Riggan in Hollywood he feels not satisfied because anything he does on the film is just become what people and industry want, from there he feels his role in Hollywood is not his true self judging by the past that once he had a dream that he belongs to the theatre. Thus, he turns to Broadway to achieve his self-esteem and to be freed from his past as a Hollywood actor. He decides to create something new by adapting a play. Even though he faces a lot of trouble in process, he still has faith and more motivated by doing this play than being in Hollywood. Thus, at this level he gets his impendence against his past and can be concluded that Riggan fulfills his first self-esteem—esteem needs from inside.

In Broadway Riggan fulfilled his second esteem—esteem from other—by the explanation of his friend—Jake.

*Riggan* : Hey. What’s up?
Jake : Um... Well. Two hours to curtain. Why don’t you rest a little bit?
Riggan : Yeah. Sure.
Jake : Last preview, buddy. We’re almost there.
Riggan : Okay.
Jake : How ya doin’?
Riggan : Good. Great.
Jake : Good. That’s god. The, uh, money came through. I just have
to transfer it to the account.
Riggan : Oh, that’s terrific...
Jake : Okay. Well, I’m gonna do that. (He stares at Riggan who seems about to collapse). You know I’m proud of you,
right? This took balls. And you did it.
Riggan : (Nods. And exhausted sadness in his eyes). I can’t do this
anymore, Jake.
Jake : What?
Riggan : I think I’m gonna cancel the preview. I’m exhausted.
Jake : It’s a joke, right? (he forces a laugh) Good one, Riggan.
Riggan : I’m starting to believe that this is not for me. The applause
is... lukewarm. I think they’re laughing at me.
Jake : What are you--? Listen. There’s a three-block line of people
waiting to see you. We are sold out. It’s a full house.
Riggan : Really?
Jake : Yes! And the French ambassador is coming. And the prince
of Saudi Arabia, with one of his wives. And... I wasn’t going
to tell you this, but—Martin Scorsese. He’s casting for his
new film. But don’t tell anyone, okay? This is between you
and me.
Riggan : Okay. I’ll be ready (Riggan smiles).

(Birdman: 01:01:43 – 01:03:12)

From the dialogue above, Riggan is really upset and burst to his anger then he is
messing his room. Jake comes in and calms Riggan. He tells that Riggan brings the
adaptation to success. Jake tells him that many of famous people as mentioned in
the dialogue will come to see the preview, even though it is hyperbolic.
Nonetheless, Jake just wants to cheer him up. Riggan feels motivated and he wants
to keep going until the end. In this case in fulfilling his esteem from others, he needs
to be appreciated and recognized by other people. Thus, from the explanation above, Riggan esteem needs is fulfilled. He fulfills both his self-esteem and esteem from the other.

2. Riggan as a Self-Actualized Individual

The peak of the hierarchy of needs in Maslow’s theory is self-actualization needs. Riggan has already fulfilled his esteem needs and now he arrives to the last needs, the self-actualization needs. Self-actualization process is taking many forms, but each person, regardless of occupation or interests, is capable of maximizing personal abilities and reaching the fullest personality development. In Birdman, Riggan can actualize himself. He passes the whole process. At the end, he gains immersive success in his stage adaptation.

The scene above shows at premiere of the play Riggan makes an outstanding genuine act: he shoots himself in the nose. This act causes Riggan gets a lot of appraise and successfully take the hearts of the audience and the critics. Riggan form of self-actualization is to create timeless work of adaptation that can be enjoyed by the people. The media claims that Riggan has arisen the spirit of American theatre by describing his work as a super-realism. According to Maslow,
self-actualization is a desire to become more of themselves using all of their own abilities, and to be anything they want with their ability. Riggan is a man who is capable of creating something new. He surpasses his limit by shooting himself to achieve the peak of his piece of work.

*Jake:* Why aren’t you saying anything? This is what you wanted wasn’t it? Riggan, this is what you wanted?

*Riggan:* It’s what I wanted.

(Birdman: 01:46:02 – 01:46:14)

After shooting himself, Riggan got hospitalized and here he reunites with his Sylvia who feels worry about his condition and what he did on the stage last night. Then there also Jake who brings the good news about the play. Jake asks Riggan, “is this what he wanted?” and Riggan answers that yes, this is what he wanted. According to analysis above, the researcher can conclude that Riggan can actualize himself. He finally can understand himself. He does not give up even though he has a lot of trouble while facing the process of directing the play and dealing with his interpersonal problem. He is all out in his acting by shooting himself with a real gun. There is no clear data for the reason he doing such self-harming activity. Nevertheless, the researcher concludes based on the theory, Riggan attempt to shoot himself is the result from his completion of fulfilling all his needs. At the end, Riggan gets satisfied at the end and can bring his successful masterpiece adaptation work into reality.

**B. Riggan Thomson’s Self Actualization Characteristics**

Self-actualizing people are concerned with fulfilling their potential and with knowing and understanding their environment. In this state, they are not seeking to
reduce tension, satisfy a deficiency, or strive for a specific object. Their goal is to enrich their lives by acting to increase tension to experience a variety of stimulating and challenging events. Because their lower order deficiency needs have been met.

As Riggan already fulfills his self-actualization, it appears that he also meets the specific self-actualization characteristic which Maslow has provided in is hierarchy of needs theory. The researcher will analyze the way Riggan meets those self-actualization characteristics.

The first characteristic is clear perception of reality, this characteristic indicates that person reached the self-actualization stage see the world, other people clearly and objectively.

**Riggan**: Wow. So, what has to happen in a person’s life for them to become a critic, anyway? What are you writing? A Review? Huh? Is it any good? Is it bad? Did you even see it? Let me read it. (He snatches the notebook from her)

**Tabitha**: I will call the police.

**Riggan**: No, you won’t. Let’s read your fucking review. (He scans the notebook) “Callow.” Callow is a label. “Lackluster.” That’s just a label. “Marginalia.”? Are you kidding me? It sounds like you need penicillin to clear that up. That’s a label, too. These are labels. You just label everything. That’s so fucking lazy. You’re lazy fucker. You’re lazy. (Riggan takes flower from a vase at the table) Do you know what this is? Do you even know what it is? You don’t. You know why? Because you can’t see this thing if you don’t know how to label it. You mistake those noises in your head for true knowledge.

**Tabitha**: Are you finished?

**Riggan**: No I am not. There’s nothing in here about technique, nothing here about structure, nothing here about intention. It’s just a bunch of crappy opinions backed up by even crappier comparisons. You write a couple paragraphs, and you know what? None of this costs you fucking anything. (Riggan tosses a glass to the wall) You risk nothing. Nothing, nothing, nothing! Well I am fucking actor. This play costs me everything. So, I’ll tell you what. You take this fucking
malicious, cowardly, shittily written review and you shove it right the fuck up your wrinkly tight ass.

Tabtha: You’re no actor, you’re celebrity. Let’s be clear on that. (Tabitha rises from her seat and place the flower on Riggan’s clench) I am going to kill your play.

(Birdman: 01:22:51 – 01:24:46)

The dialogue above shows characteristic of Riggan who has reach the self-actualization. On that occasion Riggan goes to bar for a drink and meets Tabitha Dickinson, an influential theater critic. Riggan got triggered by Tabitha’s attitude which ignores Riggan word and underestimates his capability as an actor. He conceives the critics work risk nothing but labeling things up with their subjective opinion without seeing and understanding. Riggan’s word to Tabitha shows that Riggan conceive other people clearly and objectively.

The second characteristic is focus on problems outside themselves. Riggan as a self-actualized person has a sense of mission, commitment, to which they devote his energy. Self-actualized people find pleasure and excitement in their hard work. Through this hard work this people able to satisfy their metaneeds.
The scene above takes in different time, both shows how Riggan feels he devotes to his work in his theatre adaptation work. The first scene on the left shows when Riggan defends himself from Tabitha who wants to shut his play by giving a bad review. He knows that if he confronts Tabitha in such rude way he will be in trouble, in order to show his afford to make his dream to become a great actor come true, Riggan dare to argue against Tabitha. The second scene on the right shows when Riggan talks to Sylvia. He tells her that he is going to refinance Sam’s house in Malibu to fund the show. This afford clearly shows the seriousness to dedicate everything in his work.

The third characteristic is *spontaneity, simplicity and naturalness*. This characteristic indicates that self-actualized people in every life perception act as an open individual and spontaneous idea in honest way. They do not pretend to hide their emotions and can expressed their emotion explicitly.

The scene above shows when Riggan attempt to shot himself in the nose. His act indicates spontaneity and naturalness in him. His honesty in expressing his idea produces something fresh and can be accepted in everyone perspectives even though he does an unbelievable act such self-harming by shooting his own face.
The fourth characteristic is *sense of detachment and the need for privacy*. Riggan as a self-actualized person needs detachment and privacy. This experience of isolation is without harmful effects. This characteristic indicates Riggan does not need everyone else and does not depend on other person to achieve his goals.

![Picture 12](image)

The picture above shows that Riggan has a meditation method. Most of his time spends in his own room in theatre to do a mental formation to calm himself. This proves that Riggan does the meditation thing to achieve his tranquility. He forms his mind, meets his own decision and accomplishes his goals and self-discipline. This independent characteristic makes Riggan seemed aloof or unfriendly to the other.

The fifth characteristic *creativity and originality*. Every self-actualized people are highly creative and exhibit inventiveness and originality in their work and other facets of life. This characteristic at Riggan can be seen from the picture and dialogue below.
Laura: When I imagined myself on Broadway, I never saw the dancing reindeer. Nice touch.

(Birdman: 01:11:45 – 01:11:49)

Scene above shows Laura talks to Riggan while preparation on last preview. Laura tells Riggan that she never imagined the idea of reindeer in Broadway before. Laura’s statement above shows that Riggan does not hesitate to apply spontaneous brand new idea in Broadway theatre. This indicates that he has a creativity and originality in expressing his idea.

The sixth characteristic is resistance to enculturation. This characteristic indicates autonomous personality, independent, and self-sufficient. They feel free to resist social and cultural pressure to think or behave in a certain way.
Journalist: Are you at all afraid that people will say you’re doing this play to battle the impression you are washed-up superhero?

Riggan: No, absolutely not. That’s why twenty years ago, I said no to Birdman 4

(Birdman: 01:11:45 – 01:11:49)

The picture and dialogue when Riggan had an interview with Times Square journalists. This scene indicates that Riggan has an autonomous, self-sufficient and independent characteristic against the culture. Even though he has more audience while playing as a Birdman in Hollywood, he feels free to resist social and cultural pressure to think and refuse to be what people want. Riggan governed by their own nature rather than the strictures of society.

The researcher concludes that Riggan can fulfill his basic needs in his life at Broadway theatre. Even though he has everything while plays as a Birdman in Hollywood, he feels unsatisfied and turns his life to be a theatre actor to earn his satisfaction. As he finally reaches his self-actualization, it appears that Riggan’s characteristic; clear perception of reality, focuses of problems outside themselves, spontaneity, simplicity and naturalness, sense of detachment and the need for privacy, creativeness and originality, resistance to enculturation. Those
characteristics in Riggan self-actualization indicates that Riggan fully reaches and fulfills his self-actualization needs.
CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

A. Conclusion

This research is focus on Riggan Thomson as the main character. The aim of this research is to know how Riggan Thomson fulfills his needs using the hierarchy of human needs theory by Abraham Harold Maslow. This research concludes that in fulfilling his hierarchy of human needs Riggan has steps which is should he pass before going to the higher level. There are five needs that Riggan has fulfilled. The very basic needs is physiological needs which has Riggan successfully fulfilled by living in theater. He eats, drinks, sleeps, and having sex in there. The next level of needs is safety needs which has been fulfilled, too. Riggan lives in the peaceful place that makes him feel safe and free. After that, he has love and belongingness needs, he has reached this needs by having relationship with his wife, daughter, best friend—Jake, and the stage members.

The higher level of needs is self-esteem needs which he has been successfully fulfilled by moves to Broadway and makes a play, and acts in a good way that makes him get a lot of appreciation. After all of those four needs has been successfully fulfilled by Riggan, he comes to the very last level of hierarchy of human needs—self-actualization. Riggan reaches his self-actualization by understanding his own self and knowing his purpose in life. After Riggan reaches his self-actualization the researcher can conclude that he meets six self-
actualization characteristics. Those are clear perception of reality, focus on problems outside themselves, spontaneity, simplicity and naturalness, sense of detachment and the need for privacy, creativeness and originality, and resistance to enculturation.

B. Suggestion

In analyzing film or literary works, the researcher should use the appropriate theory in order to have the right comprehension of the film itself. In this research, the researcher uses the Hierarchy of human needs theory by Abraham Harold Maslow in analyzing the main character of *Birdman* film. The researcher analyzes how the main character fulfills his hierarchy of human needs. However, it is possible for other researcher who wants to analyze this film by using another approach such as psychoanalysis by Sigmund Freud. Otherwise using the hierarchy of human needs theory by Abraham Harold Maslow in another film or literary works.
WORKS CITED


