# SELF-REALIZATION IN PAULO COELHO'S VERONICA DECIDES TO DIE

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### **ABSTRACT**

This thesis discusses the self-realization experienced by the characters in Paulo Coelho's *Veronica Decides to Die*. Self-realization is a process of forming the complete personality of an individual, in the sense that an individual will undergo a realization about his life towards an awareness that will shape his personality. The problem that he raises in this research is about the forms of individual personality that will be related to the process of realization, the factors that can affect the process of realization, as well as the implications that are obtained as a result of the achievement of individual self-realization. The objectives of the research are to identify and analyze forms, factors, and implications of self-realization. In the process of analyzing this problem, the researcher uses three theories, The first theory is Analytical psychology by Carl Jung to analyze individual personality forms, Self-Actualization by Carl Rogers to analyze the factors that influence self-realization, and Hierarchy of needs by Maslow. to analyze the implications of the self-realization process of each individual. The research method used is the researcher used a psychological approach. The results of the analysis show that four characters experience self-realization in the novel, namely, Veronica, Zedka, Eduard, and Mary. They each have their reasons and get their realization targets. They were met in Villete, a mental hospital where they could carry out the realization process.

Keywords: Self-Realization, Veronica Decides to Die, Villete

# 1. INTRODUCTION

Self-realization is a process that takes time for an awareness of the importance of something or awareness of the real-world situation. In life, self-realization often occurs in people who are experiencing repentance for all their mistakes or mistakes in their perspective on life. Or in other words, another definition of self-realization is a self-awareness process that goes through various stages and one of them goes through a regret phase. According to (Rusu, 2019), Achieving self-realization goes through several stages and difficulties, especially in controlling individual emotions and behaviors that become self-regulation of the individual itself. Self-realization is related to a person's personality, whether it is in the form of emotions, age, circumstances, or situations. Social life is very influential in the phenomenon of self-realization because living in society gives us a lot of awareness and leads to other realities of life. According to (Shutenko et al., 2017), social groups and communities are one of the requirements to achieve self-realization by integrating young people into this sphere with different orientations.

In novel *Veronica Decides To Die*, which initially tells about a young woman who experiences a decline in life confidence, she is Veronica who lives in a city in Slovenia. She wanted to commit suicide by taking large amounts of sleeping pills and making her overdose. This is where the start of a long story in a short time, she finally suffered severe heart damage and was sentenced not long after her

heart stopped beating. Finally, she was in a psychiatric hospital named Villete. Villete, the famous and feared asylum for people with mental disorders, was founded in 1991, the year of Slovenia's independence. This psychiatric hospital contains various people with problems in their lives, some are insane and some are pretending to be crazy. Villete emerged as a symbol of the worst aspects of capitalism. To be admitted to the hospital, the only thing needed was money. At least there are people who, to get rid of family members who are fighting over inheritance, are willing to pay a high price for obtaining medical records to avoid child or parental problems. Some want to avoid debt bondage or escape punishment. After some time being treated in a mental hospital, they were free from punishment or judicial process. In Villete, Veronica meets various people with their problems, they are Zedka, a patient with severe depression, Eduard a person with schizophrenia, and Mari a panic attack sufferer. This is where they connect and realize things after living together.

The problem statements of the research based on the background of the study above are: (1) What are the forms of self-realization in Paulo Coelho's *Veronica Decides To Die*?, (2) What are the factors of self-realization in Paulo Coelho's *Veronica Decides To Die*?, (3) What are the implications of self-realization for characters in Paulo Coelho's *Veronica Decides To Die*?. The purpose of this study are to identify and analyze the forms, factors, and implications of self-realization that occur in the characters in the novel *Veronica Decides to Die*.

To analyze the problem properly, the researcher uses three theories. The first theory is Analytical Psychology by Carl Jung to analyze individual personality forms. In Carl Jung's theory of Analytical Psychology (1939), Jung called the process of self-realization a process leading to the formation of a complete individual, (Schultz & Schultz, 2017). According to Jung, there are several aspects of systems that form a person's personality and soul that can influence each other; ego, personal unconscious, and the collective unconscious. In Jung's sense, the ego is the center of individual consciousness whose soul is related to perceptions, thoughts, feelings, and memories. The ego will identify whatever is in nature and knows personally by the individual, be it a good or bad experience, organizer or success, and the feeling to categorize everything that has happened, (Deaver, 2020). There are two types of individual attitudes to show how their personality is, namely extravert and introvert types. The extravert is the attitude of someone open, sociable, socially sensitive, and oriented toward other people and the outside world. While introverts are the opposite of extroverts, people with introverted attitudes have characteristics of being quiet, not good at socializing, only thinking about themselves, and don't want to care about the outside world, they only focus on themselves and their thoughts. According to Jung, everyone has the capacity for both of these attitudes, but only one becomes dominant in each person's personality. Personal unconscious according to Jung is an accumulation of one's life experiences from the past that cannot be consciously remembered. The personal unconscious, on the other hand, was formed by subliminal and repressed thoughts, (Bal, 2019). Jung emphasized that the collective unconscious is a response related to the ancestral environment or a belief passed down from ancestors. Usually, some individuals make ancestral heritage or make a hereditary belief as a reference for their life. The collective unconscious is a way of looking at someone who holds beliefs that are recognized by society.

Self-Actualization by Carl Rogers to analyze the factors that influence self-realization, according to Rogers (1995), 3 things affect the realization process in a person, either directly or indirectly, (Schultz & Schultz, 2017). These factors are formed from, Maintenance, enhancement, and self-regard. Maintenance is a need that can provide comfort for individuals, whether it's from a healthy environment or a positive association. A positive environment can help provide positive energy also to an individual. This maintenance is also a self-concept that a person wants to maintain because of the consideration of the comfort they feel. Enhancement is a person's desire to learn new things, or

an intention that grows in an individual that can trigger his new knowledge and perception of something new. The main goal of the realization process is to become a broad-minded individual, who understands the environment and has a neutral outlook on life. Some self-enhancement strategies are more socially oriented than others, (Vaughan-johnston et al., 2021). Self-regard about being able to accept the shortcomings that occur is one of the self-esteem that is at stake for an individual after getting his satisfaction. After accepting the weakness, the individual will think to improve it through the realization process and self-introspection. According to the Individuals attitude, introspection is assumed as the main key to understanding the exact self, (Mehrad, 2016).

And the last, Hierarchy of Needs by Maslow analyses the implications of the self-realization process of each individual. In looking for what is the impact or result of the self-realization process, the researcher uses one part of Maslow's (1954) theory about self-realization in the Hierarchy of Needs theory, (Schultz & Schultz, 2017). Maslow explained that in a process of achieving total realization, individuals who undergo it have different characteristics from other people. The implications described by Maslow are acceptance of the facts, social interest, profound interpersonal relations, and creativeness.

#### 2. METHOD

Research design is a method used by researchers to solve problems and become a strategy researcher to get answers from the results of questions. In this study, the researcher designed a qualitative descriptive study to observe and analyze all the data about the characters contained in Paulo Coelho's Veronica Decide for Die. Qualitative descriptive research includes who, what, and where events are happening, (Doyle et al., 2020).

Sources of data that use to dig up information from anywhere to help strengthen the results of our research. A data source is something that can produce information. According to (Ajayi, 2017), data are collected and analyzed, data only becomes information suitable for deciding in some fashion. In this research, the main data used is the novel *Veronica Decides to Die* by Paulo Coelho and the accompanying data is data obtained from journals, the internet, other books, articles, etc. *Veronica Decides To Die* is one of the famous novels written by Paulo Coelho and is published in 1998. This psychological fiction genre novel has 210 pages and 29 chapters.

In this study, researchers also used several methods of data collection. According to (Zheng, 2021), data collection methods are used to collect data systematically. First, reading the novel, the researcher took the first step, namely reading the whole novel repeatedly until he understood the storyline to make it easier to collect data. Second, identifying data, the researcher also identified the data by marking important points using post-it, underlined, and highlighter markers related to character problems to those related to self-realization. Third, sorting data, sorting is defined as an arrangement of data or records in a particular logical order, (Shabaz & Kumar, 2019). To get accurate and detailed data, the author uses a data sorting process using a sequence of events. This data sorting is taken from each chapter in Paulo Coelho's novel.

#### 3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

# 3.1 The Form of Self-Realization in Paulo Coelho's *Veronica Decides to Die* 3.1.1 The Ego

The ego is a center of individual consciousness related to perceptions, feelings, thoughts, and memories. The ego is divided into two, extraversion and introversion. Extroverts in short are people who are very open in communicating with others, while introverts are people who are closed to their

lives and are not too comfortable receiving influence or communication with others, they only focus on themselves. A person's personality from the type of attitude they have in living their lives. Veronica is the type of person who is introverted because she does not want to get involved with other people. She is originally the type of individual who does not want to interfere in other people's lives.

"she didn't want to make friends, to develop a social circle, to create allies for a great mass revolt. She had only one fixed idea: death." (Coelho,1998:29)

Even during Veronica and Zedka's first meeting, Veronica initially does not respond to Zedka's invitation with the excuse that she is only thinking about how she would die, not thinking about how she makes friends with other people. Eduard also falls into the type of person who has an introverted attitude. He becomes an introvert who distanced himself from the crowd after having an accident and being treated in the Villete.

"not that he could get very excited about any of them; he either got too agitated or too sleepy and immediately lost interest in what was going on around him." (Coelho,1998:160)

Eduard avoids all activities related to other people, he shuts himself off to find out about other people's problems. Eduard did not recover, and instead, his condition become worse. He ended up just focusing on reading books and not doing the things that young people his age did.

#### 3.1.2 Personal Unconscious

Personal unconscious in Jung's theory refers to the accumulation of experiences from a person's lifetime that is not consciously remembered. This is a form of emotion that stays in a person's soul throughout his lifetime, it can be a fantasy or a memory that is difficult to control by himself. As can see this Zedka's life in *Veronica Decides To Die*.

"In Zedka's case, however, the reasons were simpler than anyone suspected: a man hidden in her past, or rather, the fantasy she had built up about a man she had known a long time ago." (Coelho,1998:49)

Zedka is included in the personal unconscious type because she is experiencing depression due to her past fantasies. A collection of stories from the past and her fantasies makes her live with regret, heartbreak, greed, and loss of control over himself. Zedka is a sufferer of major depression. The reason for her depression is because of her fantasies about the man in her past. her love for men in her past was not accomplished or unrequited.

#### 3.1.3 Collective Unconscious

According to Jung, the collective unconscious is something that comes from our past, whether it's traditional beliefs or general beliefs that it is already held since our ancestors until now. This can be seen in the case of Mary, where Mary is too fixated on her religious life and believes in the story of paradise. Where the paradise story is meant to be a story about the past of Adam and Eve who were trapped by God and became sinful by eating the forbidden fruit. According to Mary, the story of Paradise is a symbol of injustice that occurred long ago. It is God who is unjust and made a trap

and deliberately dropped Adam and Eve into sin. She makes this case as a reference to see the chaos of the world today. Because she thinks too much about the chaos that is happening in the world today.

#### 3.2 The Factors of Self-Realization in Paulo Coelho's Veronica Decides To Die

# 3.2.1 Maintenance

Maintenance is the desire to maintain a self-concept that provides a sense of comfort or an environment that is needed by an individual to provide comfort and tranquility so that the self-realization process can run well. A good environment greatly affects the shape of a person's personality and can help perfect his self-realization. It can also be a comfortable place where a person can develop himself well and be free to do anything without feeling pressured. The form of comfort needed by individuals can come from the environment or where they live.

"To say goodbye. That was the really difficult part: once in a mental hospital, a person grows used to the freedom that exists in the world of madness and becomes addicted to it. You no longer have to take on responsibilities, to struggle to earn your daily bread, to be bothered with repetitive, mundane tasks." (Coelho.1998: 48)

Veronika, Eduard, Zedka, and Mary also experienced their self-realization process in Villete because they were met there. As can be seen in each of the characters, it shows that the Villete environment has a great influence on their lives. Veronica experienced an adjustment while in Villete for a few days, life in Villete had a strong impact on her. She has started to get used to all the rules and follows all the rules there like any normal person. Zedka also felt the same way, when she finished her treatment, she had to get out of Villete. She had thought about staying in Villete and joining the fraternity. Because she already feels Villete like her own home. Eduard also felt the same comfortable feeling. He had lived in Villete a long time. He is comfortable with Villete's life, he doesn't even want to get out of there even though he knows how to get out of Villete. But in Mary's case, she pretended to say that she still needed further treatment from Dr. Igor so that she could remain in Villete after being divorced by her husband.

#### 3.2.2 Enhancement

Enhancement is a factor that is generated in the individual in the form of a desire, it is an expectation that triggers the individual's way of thinking and can affect its realization. This happened to Veronica, after hearing the diagnosis of her death, she began to hope to live longer. She then contemplated many things, even though from the beginning had suicidal intentions, then felt fear after knowing she would die in a short time. While in Villete, she regretted all her actions, then she realized a lot of things that changed her mind about everything ending in death, much that she could do. Then she started to struggle to live even though she knew how it was, Veronica still tried to use her time as best as possible with the help of two people who were close to her, namely Zedka and Eduard. This factor made Veronica able to get a new wish in her life, even though at first she wanted to keep her wish to die.

# 3.2.3 Self-Regard

Self-regard is a positive acceptance of oneself after experiencing satisfaction with all things that occur from life experience, this is a factor where individuals accept all their weaknesses before correcting their shortcomings and giving up everything about their lives and daring to start something new to get a safe life. This can be seen in Eduard's case, the schizophrenic resigned to his life and began to train himself to get used to the situation.

"Eduard was so impressed by what he had read, though, that he seriously considered becoming a saint and using the accident as an opportunity to change the direction of his life." (Coelho,1998:167)

After Eduard had an accident that caused his leg to break, he became quiet and all he could do was read a book. He read a lot of books about visionaries that tell about the chosen people, he became moved to follow the way of these visionaries and intends to become a saint. Eduard thought it would change his poor life. Eduard's attitude shows a positive attitude that he applies which changes the way he thinks about living life, thus supporting a will to fight for the new life he wants to lead.

# 3.3 The Implications of Self-Realization in Paulo Coelho's *Veronica Decides To Die*3.3.1 An Acceptance of the facts

The result of a long process after experiencing the first realization is to accept its reality, begin to realize the weaknesses and mistakes, and then begin to accept the situation around. Some things such as self-reflection also appear to support self-acceptance. Some people initially experience a decline in self-confidence and excessive insecurity, after undergoing the process of realization they begin to accept the realities of life and understand better how to act to solve various problems that come their way, they even become people who have a strong ambition to get a new target in their life, (Andi et al., 2014). After going through a long process of realization in Villete, veronica, Zedka, Eduard, and Mary got a phase called self-acceptance as an achievement after going through various things. In Veronica's case, what she achieved is to accept the reality of her life and regret all her actions and thoughts in the past. After enrolling in villete, she realized the importance of life, she regretted that she has planned to commit suicide.

Veronika who is initially cold and does not want to open up to communicate with others became very aware of the importance of the presence of other people around her after the diagnosis of her life which is only a week away. These attitudes are shown in various ways. First, is that she begins to follow the rules and regulations in villete, veronica gets used to life in Villete and began to adapt well. Zedka after undergoing insulin treatment and doing an astral journey will be out of Villete. She is very happy with the situation in Villete but she realized that he could still enjoy anything outside Villete, being able to meet her husband and children and it is a fun part of her life after she has experienced so many things in Villete. Zedka accepts the fact that it will be difficult for her to find a job, and may be able to enjoy a normal life as long as she can face the challenges of her daily life and must be able to control her sanity. Eduard is a schizophrenic who has lived in Villete for a long time. After spending his days in the Villete. He realized that many things he has had through in the hospital which are intentional and unintentional events. The form of his achievement so far is that he feels that he has accepted his situation. He does not even embarrass his parents and has lost the ambition that he has

instilled. Eduard tries to understand the crazy patients there, even though he is already bored with his life. Mary learned a lot from Villete. She joins the fraternity and participates in all activities in the Villete although she does has a strict personality. She has her principles when it comes to living her life. The form of Mary's self-acceptance after facing the various realities of her life that are tortuous is when Mary tells her desire and the result of her reflection so far that she wants to start her life again. She also has accepted the fact that she has a panic attack sufferer.

# 3.3.2 Social Interest

Social interest is an achievement in the process of self-realization, the stage where an individual is able can a larger social environment. In this stage the results obtained are individuals are able can adapt and awareness of the importance of social life. They find a social group they can interact with. Villete is a place where patients can do whatever they want. There is such a thing as a long-established fraternity whose members are patients in the Villete, this fraternity has a leader to lead the meeting, to mediate in dealing with problems. Even though this is a gathering of crazy people, they do a lot of things together and make the Villete situation more joyful. As experienced by Mary. She joins the fraternity and became close to the other members. Even when she comes out of the Villete, she left a letter to the fraternity members thanking them and apologizing. The other members are already realized that Mary has left Villete because previously they think she is just going to the cinema or taking a walk as usual.

# 3.3.3 Profound Interpersonal Relations

Like social interest, this level leads to socialization to a narrower scope between two people in a more personal sphere. On the way to perfect realization, establishing deeper relationships with other people that make an individual comfortable and make many memories is one of the results.

The relationship between Veronika and schizophrenic Eduard that they is fall in love and need each other. They first meet in the piano room when a very fragile veronica played her music and it caught the attention of schizophrenic Eduard. Eduard comes and looks like he gets magic from Veronica's music, and then they fall in love with each other. The relationship between Veronica and Zedka is also close, the relationship that both of them start to grow when they are in the same ward. Although at first Veronica does not want to be friends with anyone. Zedka, who is first in Villete, talk to her that she is Veronika's first friend in Villete. Another interpersonal relationship is between Eduard and Mary. Eduard loves Mary because she is the first person to treat her like a human and talk to her when Eduard knows his first diagnosis with schizophrenia and brought him to Villete.

#### 3.3.4 Creativeness

Creativity is a form of a spontaneous attitude of an individual to do what he wants to do, they also become very flexible and willing to make mistakes and learn from them. The creative attitude that is usually shown by an individual is to create new creativity, she or he will try to do new things in life. Like what happened to Veronica, she did something he never imagine, she never imagined she would slap a fraternity leader and cry weakly in front of the nurses in the Villete while lamenting her fate. She is relieved to do all that, she feels should do something she has not imagined before dying.

But then she realized what she does not because she regretted doing it, but she realized she has lost her true self. She lost control of herself and thought such actions that does not match her personality. The same thing happens to Mary's transformation. Mary who has in been at Villete for a long time decided that she would no longer be in the legal world after she left Villete. She felt that the legal world was useless, she even wanted another job. But she has decided to work in a humanitarian organization as a volunteer. Mary feels this kind of work is more important than working in the crazy world of law. As can be concluded from the previous explanation having a new mind to live her life after she realizes various bad things have happened.

# 4. CONCLUSION

After analyzing the data, it can be concluded that in Paulo Coelho's Veronica Decides To Die, there are four characters, namely Veronika, Zedka, Eduard, and Mary, who undergo a self-realization process. The types of self-realization experienced by each character are assessed from the personalities of the characters which are divided into ego, personal unconscious, and collective unconscious according to Carl Jung's theory. Then the factors that affect the characters according to Rogers' theory, namely maintenance, enhancement, and self-regard. The factor in question is the influence of the environment as well as the willingness of the character to carry out the realization process. In a process, there are results achieved from the four characters, which are divided into 4 according to Maslow's Theory, an acceptance of the facts, social interest, profound interpersonal relations, and creativeness. These four characters go through a process of self-realization at a mental hospital called Villete. They know each other and reach various stages in their lives through their social interactions.

First, Veronica undergoes a process of realization after trying to commit suicide, but because she is diagnosed with heart disease due to a drug overdose. She started living in Villete to be cared for, that's where she met Eduard, Zedka, and Mary. A big change occurred in Veronica during her time at Villete, she was originally an introvert and was able to do everything she had never done in her life. The second character, Zedka, who is a depressed patient due to fantasies about men in her past, follows an insulin treatment known as an astral journey. She follows the treatment to cure her depression and fulfill her fantasy desires, but after her depression is cured she begins to improve and comes out of Villete as a happy crazy person. The third character, Eduard the schizophrenic also turned out to have a sad past story, he had an accident and ended up in Villete. He had no hope in life before he met Veronica. The last, Mary is a senior lawyer who suffers from panic attack disorder due to inner turmoil about a world situation filled with rebellion and injustice. She was divorced from her husband and started life in Villete, where she joined a fraternity group, finally, she was able to go out and do what she wanted, which was to work in a humanitarian organization. The results of the analysis conducted by the researcher found that the four characters had their respective cases and underwent changes after undergoing their realization, which was carried out intentionally or unintentionally.

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