

## **Mandela's Autobiographical Journey: Exploring Foundational Personality Elements and Peak Experiences**

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### **Abstract**

*This research paper presents an 'Organismic evaluation of Mandela's experiences; A Phenomenological Approach' which digs deeper into myriad layers of experiences of Mandela's life building his consciousness against the subjectivity, as portrayed by himself in his autobiography 'Long Walk to Freedom'. The research analyses the emotional experiences that build Mandela's 'self-concept' and personality traits through the lens of 'Humanistic Theories' purported by Carl Rogers and Abraham Maslow. These 'Humanistic' psychologists ponder on the healthy mind in human beings leading them towards 'self-actualization' and becoming a 'fully functional person' achieving the pinnacle of their inner potential. An organismic evaluation of Mandela's narrative shows his 'self-concept' and its congruence' with his experiences throughout his life leading him towards 'self-actualization.' His continuous interactions with the outer world build his subjectivity leading towards politicizing his ideas. Implicitly, the discourse underlines the peak experiences which guide Mandela in attaining a better cognizance. The narrative shows that Mandela continuously learns from his present experiences and accordingly builds his knowledge regarding the matters at hand. Through his inner strength and fortitude Mandela walks through the years of incarceration, never bending in front of white dominance and dissolving the differences among his people. With maturity in his 'self-actualization', Mandela becomes a 'fully functional person' and sees beyond the immediate future taking the whole nation into an era of unprecedented liberation.*

**Keywords:** Organismic Evaluation, Phenomenological, Peak Experiences, Self-Actualization, Fully-Functional Personality.

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### **1. Introduction**

Autobiographies present a vast amalgamation of emotional experiences juxtaposed against the societal and political divisions in a particular lifetime. (Green, 2008, p.53) This research paper indulges in carving out the hidden forces that are at work in the building of personality as portrayed in the autobiography of Mandela through a humanistic phenomenological lens. This research has been triggered by the thought of identifying the uncanny forces that make a personality as inclusive, accomplished, and iconoclast as Mandela. In contrast, the world has witnessed the personality aura of Hitler who is tantamount to annihilation and division, so it evidently implies that there must be a hidden force or mechanism, inside every being that sculpts out each person in an entirely different way with disparate characteristics and attributes which are developed according to the person's inner conception of experiences. Life narratives reflect the inner order of the authors rather than imitation of the external reality, beyond the borders of truth or falsehood. (Smith & Watson, 2010, p.30). The genre of autobiography introduces the finer nuances of experiences in life, their integration in the building of consciousness about the predominant philosophies and practices in that society, and in turn builds the subjectivity or more accurately

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the individuality of the person. (Williams, 1983, p.128). According to Rogers (1995), these narratives provide *strong directional tendencies* (p.27) leading toward a fully functional person. These directional tendencies vicariously give insight into the characteristics and mechanisms incorporated in the making of such a great leader. This research paper analyzes such experiences in the autobiography of Nelson Mandela, which in turn grants the consciousness of *being-in-the-world* and later in life leads the person towards becoming a *fully functional person*.

An autobiography represents the unique consciousness of a person grown out of his unique societal experiences and the concomitant subjectivity attached to them. (Thompson, p.171-172) Taking these concomitant subjectivities into consideration, and further peeling off the layers of emotional, psychological, and conscious development through Abraham Maslow and Carl Rogers' Humanistic psychology, unfolds the blueprint of a self-actualized person who later develops into a fully functional person. Mandela's instances of *peak experiences* paved the way towards achieving the pinnacle of his potentialities, which lie hidden in his life narrative. Mandela's autobiography obliquely reflects his continuous drive for self-realization, and the development of his self-concept and its congruence, elucidating the constant course of refining his cognitive and rational capacities, mitigating the urge for revenge, and emphasizing inclusiveness, transparency, and appropriateness.

Hence, '*Long Walk to Freedom*' and its assemblage of experiences, act as a magnifying lens to probe deeper into the characteristics of a self-actualized person, his self-concept and subjectivities, and how Mandela learns from his experiences and leads a fully functional life. These experiences in the narrative act as the building blocks of his consciousness and reflect upon his self-actualizing tendency leading toward the making of Mandela's personality.

## **2. Phenomenological analysis of an Autobiography through the lens of Humanistic psychology**

*Autos*, *bios*, and *graphien*, are the three Greek words that constitute the word of Autobiography, collectively these three words stand for, *self*, *life*, and *to write*, respectively, which means the life-story of an individual in his own words. (Shands et al., 2015, p.8) The autobiographical element is almost inevitably inextricable from literary writings. From ages, autobiography is exuding the characteristics of being related both to the field of history as well as literature. However, autobiography has secured an ample amount of acknowledgment to itself, to further consolidate the point, Dilthey (1961) classifies it as the *highest and most instructive form that* pulls in the essence of life and living as experienced by the narrator. (p.191) Autobiography invokes the most interesting connection between *the author, narrator and the protagonist*, which makes it different from the other genres, and also transports the inner frame of reference of the self, that is being constructed in an autobiography. (Lejeune, 1989, p.100)

This research paper focuses on the dynamics of phenomenology and existentialism, wherein both these phenomenons dig into the relation of subjectivity and the attained consciousness narrated by the author of the autobiography. An individual's past experience in discourse is juxtaposed against the subjectivities of the person. As Green (2008) explains that an autobiography is a life story in discourse creating a robust link between the experiences of a person's life and the essence or subjectivities attached to them. (p.53). Edmund Husserl, purported the phenomenal relation between human subjectivity and attained consciousness, leading to the dawn of a new philosophy, phenomenology. Phenomenology solely focuses on the essence of subjective experiences which are intertwined with emotional and psychological implications, building the consciousness of the person. It has varied definitions overlapping different dynamics of human experience, however, a succinct yet all-inclusive definition is put forth by Gabriella Farina:

Phenomenology involves a change in the 'sense of the world': everything acquires its sense and value only when it becomes the content of the lived experience of the subject correlated to his intentional acts. (Farina, 2014, p.50)

With the inception of *Existentialism* in the twentieth century, people and especially thinkers became extremely concerned regarding the ideology of *being-in-the-world*, life, its existence and reasons, free will, taking responsibility to exercise autonomy and making a sense out of the ongoing absurdity of life. Sartre unravels the intriguing of point of convergence, that all existentialists have "in common is the fundamental doctrine that existence precedes essence". (as cited in Copleston, 1948, p.23) Subjective experiences stand as sole testimony of their lived reality and act as their referential truths, wherein the person himself becomes the fountainhead of information by existentialists. Rollo May expounds *Existentialism* as a linking bond connecting the abstract reality with the subjective inner world, building a strong relation between experience and its essence. (as cited in Engler, 2009, p379)

The imbricating point, of both phenomenology and existentialism, is proven to be the individual, the *being* whose experiences give rise to their ideologies. Abraham Maslow and Carl Rogers, are the two names who are considered the founders of Humanistic Psychology, putting the person at the center of study, phenomenologically, by evaluating the emotional impact and openness to the experience. *Humanistic Psychology* brings the subjective experiences in the limelight, and consider them responsible for the building of a personality, as personality revolves around the core of the essence of the felt experience by the individual. (as cited in Carducci, 2015, p.214) Carl Rogers postulates that the "organism reacts to the field as it is perceived. This perpetual field is, for the individual, 'reality'", (Rogers, 2015, p.484) this makes the individual stand as the *undisputed expert* (as cited in Carducci, 2015, p206) of his personality.

The *organismic evaluation*, as purported by Rogers, takes into account all possible corporeal, sensory, and emotive ramifications attached to an experience and analyses how these mundane feelings attached to the experience, add in the building of ideologies and shaping personality to achieve the inner potential. (Carducci, 2015, pp. 208-213) The inner potential if worked thoroughly acts as the *self-actualizing tendency*, wherein the individual repeatedly nullifies the old redundant philosophies and develops more accurate and practical ideologies and beliefs that help them become a *fully functional person*. Maslow claims through his vast repertoire of research that a "fully functional person has a more accurate perception of reality, a greater acceptance of self and others, being true to themselves, having peak experiences, being other-centered and autonomous." (as cited in Carducci, 2015, p.252) The present research delves deep into the self-concept and its congruence in the lifetime of Mandela, it also peeks into the underlying peak experiences that have immensely helped in the building of his consciousness and drove his personality towards being a *fully-functional person*.

### **3. Mandela's Autobiography Read through Other's Perspectives**

Mandela's autobiography was first published in 1994 and analyzed from many perspectives. His autobiography provides a diversity of emotions embedded in his experiences of life. These life experiences are deciphered on different levels with various perspectives. The experiences of Mandela strongly reflect upon the arduous path of struggle he chooses throughout life. Fanie du Toit reflects upon the hardships and unbending fortitude that Mandela keeps up throughout his life. He delves into the uniqueness of Mandela's character by considering his autobiography in her piece, 'Trauma, Community, and Reflections: Mandela's Extended Journey towards Solidarity with All South Africans.' Toit commends his essential realism, a quality Mandela acquires after enduring years of discrimination, disgrace, mortification, and inequity. His life story exemplifies

how Mandela transforms challenges into opportunities, persisting with a singular goal in mind – achieving ‘freedom.’ Toit concludes the article by asserting that the years spent in confinement do not cloud his awareness; instead, they enhance his ability to contemplate reconciliation with his adversaries. In this article, Toit conducts a superficial examination without delving deep into the experiences and inclinations of Mandela.

Some researchers view the same manuscript with an entirely different lens. For some the focus is Mandela’s strength yet for others it is robust retaliation against the accepted norms of the society. David Morselli and Stefano Passini (2010) carry out comparative research on the world’s most renowned leaders and try to figure out the similarity index in patterns of disobedience and retaliation against the more powerful prevailing norms. In their 2010 study, Morselli and Passini analyze and juxtapose expressions within autobiographies concerning parental reflections, instances of racial bias, and their unwavering commitment to resilience and values amidst adversity. They present the parallels in their experiences during confinement, interpreting their sentences as evidence of their dedication to a cause. The societal sphere, according to them, plays a pivotal role in reinforcing their commitment to a broader objective, specifically the freedom of their people (p.308). Subsequent aspects of their research underscore the significance of social context and relationships as vital sources of sustenance during detention, occupying a substantial portion within their narratives. Morselli and Passini argue that none of these figures felt isolated when confronting persecution; rather, a shared sense of unity with fellow inmates motivated resistance for the sake of their nation, reflecting strength in solidarity with their compatriots (p.309). Drawing upon these life experiences depicted in the narratives, Morselli and Passini advocate for the acts of nonconformity by figures such as Gandhi, Mandela, and King against oppressors. They assert that disobedience should not be perceived as a transgression, but contend that obedience is the true transgression in such an oppressed and constricted society.

Jihan Zakariya (2015) provides an alternative perspective on the autobiographies of Nelson Mandela and Edward Said in her essay 'Humanism in the Autobiographies of Edward Said and Nelson Mandela: Memory as Action.' Zakariya (2015) interprets Mandela's autobiography as a testament to humanistic activism shaped by the memory of his painful encounters with racial bias, while Said exposes similar subjugation and inhumanity within Palestinian society. Both Mandela and Said, according to Zakariya, adopt humanist attitudes and engage in actions that foster an understanding of racial diversity, promoting coexistence and peaceful conflict resolution over hostile and violent methods (Zakariya, 2015, p.199). Zakariya incorporates Said's concept of 'humanism' as a continuous process of self-understanding and self-realization through a thorough analysis of history (Said, 2004, p.26) within the societal context. Her essay concludes that the autobiographies of Mandela and Said depict them as products shaped by socio-political and cultural experiences, influencing their present consciousness and awareness of the dynamics between oppressors and the oppressed (Zakariya, 2015, p.203). This research aligns with Zakariya's humanistic approach, focusing on self-realization and consciousness development, delving into the inner strengths and characteristics essential for the struggle towards becoming self-actualized individuals.

Others perceive Mandela's autobiography through a didactic lens, attributing spiritual and healing powers to the narrative. In the essay 'Struggle History and Self-Help: The Parallel Lives of Nelson Mandela in Conventional and Figurative Biography,' author Steve Davis explores the spiritual and healing effects embedded in Mandela's life narratives within the realm of literature. Davis (2014) analyzes 'A Long Walk to Freedom' alongside other biographies of Mandela, categorizing it as a 'didactic' work that serves the purpose of 'self-help' by emphasizing self-realization and

achievement. Davis delves into the narrative's myriad events, concluding that each experience contains lessons that immunize the future against past mistakes while simultaneously empowering or enlightening the reader (p.171). While Davis's essay intersects with this research by acknowledging the formative role of past experiences in shaping Mandela's consciousness, his primary focus lies on the didactic influences on the reader. The exploration of the consciousness-granting aspect of experience is further examined through a humanistic psychological approach in this research.

The autobiography genre presents a complex narrative intertwining various facets of life. Authors engage in autobiographical writing for diverse reasons – to make sense of life experiences, establish a connection with their past selves, and imbue their life story with didactic significance. It transcends mere storytelling, delving into the author's identity, incorporating historical and social contexts, and addressing political scenarios of a specific period. This richness of diversity provides ample research opportunities. This dissertation aims to fill a gap in existing literature by revealing how Mandela's autobiography implicitly illuminates the attributes of a self-actualized person and guides the journey toward becoming a fully functional individual. Autobiographies, as reflections of an author's lifetime, offer insights into personality development. This research, employing a 'humanistic phenomenological' approach, focuses on the making of personality through Mandela's lens of 'self-concept' analyzed in alignment with Carl Rogers' concept of congruence. It delves deeper into the underlying force maturing Mandela beyond his previous self—a force described as a self-actualization tendency by Carl Rogers and Abraham Maslow. While prior research touches on these inner forces, this study explores the intricate process of Mandela's development, considering nature, nurture, characteristics, and experiential learning. The research uniquely examines the achievement of a fully functional person with a pronounced self-actualization tendency, evolving through continuous learning from experiences. Mandela's autobiography is such a manuscript which provides ample amount of data for such probing as James Olney says:

A man's autobiography is thus like a magnifying lens, focusing and intensifying that same peculiar creative vitality that informs all the volumes of his collected works; it is the symptomatic key to all else that he did, and naturally, to all he was. (Olney, 1971, p.3)

#### **4. Discussion and Analysis**

*"Long Walk to Freedom"* traces the trajectory of Nelson Mandela's life through the lens of his emotions, perspectives, and subjectivities. This research paper centers on the lived experience of *being-in-the-world*, considering the societal, radical, political, and temporal constraints articulated by the author. Utilizing a phenomenological approach to Mandela's autobiography reveals the subjectivity inherent in his experiences, forming the foundation of his narrative where language serves as a discursive tool expressing these worldly interactions. According to Joan Scott (1991), an autobiography, in this case, *"Long Walk to Freedom"*, encapsulates the discursive knowledge of the self (p.774). Hence, a life narrative is viewed as the fundamental evidence in the phenomenological study of personality, where the individual is the nexus and considered the "undisputed expert" (Carducci, 2015, p.206) of his experiences.

Mandela's autobiography explicitly articulates his experiences, justifying his perspective and adequately detailing his mental and emotional stratification in response to his life happenings, establishing subjectivity in terms of societal disparities and resemblances. Subsequently, subjectivity permeates the discourse of Mandela's autobiography, as Carl Rogers' puts it to be a unique way of viewing and expressing the world around (as cited in Carducci, 2015, p.207). Joan Scott (1991) posits that experience is not a mere replica of events; instead, it involves interpretation and can be further interpreted (p.774). By dissecting Mandela's experiences into their emotional,

social, and psychological dimensions, a comprehensive understanding of his journey towards *self-actualization* leading to a *fully-functional* personality is accomplished. This exploration aligns with probing perspectives such as those articulated by Joan Scott.

Mandela's choice of a first-person narrative establishes a bond of trust and intimacy between the reader and the author. Inaugurating his narrative with fond childhood memories, Mandela expresses a deep-seated "love for the veld, open spaces, and the simple beauties of nature, emphasizing the clean line of the horizon." (Mandela, 2013, p.11) Morselli and Passini (2010) assert the enduring moral influence of childhood on leaders like Mahatma Gandhi, Martin Luther King, and Nelson Mandela (p.305). The initial chapters vividly portray Mandela's "abiding connection to the Thembu royal house" (Mandela, 2013, p.3), showcasing a profound sense of belonging to his ancestors. Despite the imposed inferior status under British rule, Mandela upholds the grandeur of his lineage, exhibiting unwavering belief and confidence in himself, without succumbing to undecipherable complexities of race and inferiority. Throughout the autobiography, Mandela acknowledges that "his roots were his destiny." (Mandela, 2013, p.42) His narrative mirrors clarity of thought and gained consciousness, with words reflecting virtues ingrained intrinsically in his personality. Reading between the lines, virtues such as respect emerge as inherent to Mandela's character, evident in his descriptions of relationships.

Mandela's inaugural chapter in his autobiography acknowledges his father's limited inheritance, leading to his own impoverishment. However, the narrative refrains from harboring any resentment towards these circumstances. Mandela, instead, highlights the optimistic and ethical characteristic of his father's failure – a steadfast resistance against the incontestable supremacy and unquestionable power of whites. This distinction becomes apparent when contrasting it with Adolf Hitler's autobiography, *Mein Kampf*, where Hitler recounts his father's destitute with contempt and uses unsympathetic language. Hitler's diction reflects an underlying derision and harshness, mirroring his personality. In contrast, Mandela's narrative reveres his elders, even when critiquing customs or rituals, avoiding any hint of resentment, disdain, or superiority. For instance, describing his amazement at white children questioning their parents, Mandela politely notes that "in his household, questions were considered a nuisance, and adults shared information as deemed necessary." (Mandela, 2013, p.13) Mandela's storytelling introduces moments of ambivalence and equivocation in his African experiences, yet his language remains devoid of disparagement or any supercilious judgmental tones.

As Mandela revisits past experiences through memory, language becomes the stage for their reenactment (Scott, p.34). The words chosen play a crucial role in conveying the intensity of these experiences and their subjectivity building the consciousness of *being-in-the-world*. The selection and arrangement of words not only shape the mood and mode of the discourse but also provide insights into Mandela's inner consciousness and personality development. The narrative unifies the self by invoking scattered memories throughout a lifetime, integrating "perception and communication of experiences" (Engler, 2009, p.357). Mandela's autobiography unveils "a conscious experience of being alive, moment to moment" (Funder, 2004, p.423), and progressing towards the realization of self-actualization in life. A closer examination of Mandela's experiences in the autobiography brings forth his personality traits and characteristics, illustrating how he confronts the world and develops his consciousness.

#### **4.1. Self-concept and congruence**

Carl Rogers purports in his Humanistic stance that an individual's self-concept is built by his subjective view determined by the phenomenal field encapsulating the person. (as cited in Carducci, 2015, p.208) Mandela concurs, emphasizing the impact of the phenomenal field on the

self-concept, asserting, "I maintain that nurture, rather than nature, is the primary molder of personality" (Mandela, 2013, p.7). He identifies common qualities with his father, such as proud rebelliousness and a persistent sense of evenhandedness, which persist throughout the narrative, harmoniously coexisting with his inner perceptions of self—this leads to maintaining a state of congruence which is considerably essential for self-actualization, as purported by Rogers. Mandela recounts a seemingly inconsequential incident involving an unruly donkey that threw him into a thorny bush, subjecting him to be ridiculed by his fellow boys. This incident, though minor, holds profound significance in Mandela's consciousness, in terms of organismic evaluation, as it involved the awakening of emotional rigor. His reflection on this experience highlights the profound impact on his values, particularly his aversion to causing humiliation to others. Mandela firmly believes that inflicting agony upon someone should not be within human capability. This same ideology, later in life, leads him to renounce the unjust mortification at the hands of the whites. The inclusion of such memories in his narrative implicitly reflects Mandela's benevolent, amiable, and inclusive nature, underscoring his belief in honoring and dignifying every individual irrespective of race, caste, and nationality. Mandela explicitly proclaims in the narrative that he never mortified even his enemies as it was something that he despised even for his rivals. (Mandela, 2013, p.12)

According to Carl Rogers, the self is "a whole entity that contains much and can be described as deep, full, and whole" (as cited in Allen, 2006, p.214), working together and taking the individual towards self-actualization. This whole entity unfolds across various incidents and behaviors throughout a person's lifetime, reflecting the internal order of the subjective self, sculpted in conjunction with the external world. The interaction between the inner self and the outer phenomenal field shapes this whole entity, evident in the narrative of "Long Walk to Freedom." Mandela's experiences unveil him as a conscientious individual with a rigorous self-examination. Reflecting on an incident where he impulsively stole maize and roasted it, Mandela felt an unpleasant mixture of fear and shame when confronted by the Regent's wife (Mandela, 2013, p.23). This fear and shame reveal Mandela's self-reproaching attitude, demonstrating his inner sense of justice. His fairness and just nature extend to his judgments, perceiving the good in the world without malice or envy. This same trait is reflected in his opinion of the Regent's family, whom he considers benefactors, guiding and punishing him in the spirit of loving fairness. Despite Jogintaba's sternness, Mandela never doubted his love (Mandela, 2013, p.21).

In a later part of the narrative, when Mandela expresses his delight at receiving two heifers and four sheep as a reward after the completion of the ritual of circumcision, he specifically emphasizes not feeling envious or resentful of Justice's gifts, acknowledging Justice as the son of the king (Mandela, 2013, p.34). This episode reveals Mandela's envy-free, natural, and realistic approach, understanding the societal hierarchy. This aspect of his personality resurfaces when comparing himself to fellow students at Clarkebury. Throughout the narrative, Mandela comprehends his strengths and weaknesses in comparison to his surroundings, working through life comfortably. While he acknowledges the need to emulate the students at Clarkebury, he never harbors envy toward them (Mandela, 2013, p.42). Mandela's realistic approach and positive thinking lead him to understand the distinctions in upbringing between a country boy like himself and the intellectual prowess at Clarkebury. Maslow's idea that self-actualized individuals possess realistic knowledge, self-acceptance, independence, and spontaneity aligns with Mandela's narrative (as cited in Friedman, Schustack, 2015, p.218). Mandela's story exemplifies these characteristics, as he never becomes complacent, consistently striving to achieve the missing parts in his life. His realistic

approach empowers him to anticipate what is lacking and equip himself to navigate the challenges of the world.

While narrating about the students having instinctive capabilities at Fort Hare, Mandela highlights the virtues of self-discipline and patience as crucial for penultimate accomplishment and self-enhancement (Mandela, 2013, p.55). Maslow's perspective, noting idiosyncratic strengths and standards intrinsic to all members of the human species, aligns with this understanding that human nature is not solely shaped by nurture. (as cited in Allen, 2006, p.231) "Long Walk to Freedom" unfolds aspects of Mandela's personality that cannot be solely attributed to nurture, hinting at a third force at work that sculpts the personality and embeds some distinct traits. This uncanny and invisible force impregnates his character with virtues such as clear-headedness, realism, patience, self-discipline, and fortitude.

During his time at Healdtown, Mandela assumes the role of a prefect and encounters a moral dilemma, torn between duty and loyalty to a fellow prefect. One night, while on duty, Mandela witnesses another prefect violating the rules by relieving himself in the bushes on the veranda—a situation where reporting a fellow prefect is discouraged. (Mandela, 2013, p.47) His commitment to duty clashes with his allegiance to the other prefect, leading Mandela to grapple with the decision to name him among the wrongdoers. Ultimately, Mandela chooses loyalty over duty and discards the entire list of culprits. This incident sparks introspection, prompting Mandela to question who will guard the guardians themselves. (Mandela, 2013, p.47) This conflict reappears in Mandela's life, challenging his allegiance to a friend versus his commitment to the organization. As his personality evolves, Mandela consistently prioritizes the well-being of his people or a group over personal interests or allegiances, fostering a sense of inclusivity and tolerance for the greater good. In a parallel scenario, while Mandela holds no reservations about the noble intentions of his colleague within the ANC, he finds himself at odds with the organization's stance. Nonetheless, recognizing the importance of unity for the welfare of the organization at large, Mandela ultimately aligns himself with the organization's position, and regretfully says about the man;

I well knew that I would be condemning the action of a man whose integrity and devotion I never questioned, a man whose sacrifice in the liberation struggle was far greater than my own. I knew that the action that he called for was in fact a noble one. (Mandela, 2013, p.126)

The narrative of "Long Walk to Freedom" reveals numerous incidents that underscore characteristics that shaped Mandela into a self-actualized person, contributing to his unparalleled leadership acumen. Loyalty, a pivotal virtue for Mandela, takes a central role in upholding truth, yet he willingly sacrifices personal allegiances for higher societal goals. Unwavering fidelity and truthfulness remain constant in his character, evident from his principled stance at Fort Hare. Selected as a representative for the Student Representative Council, Mandela faces a situation where the majority of students boycott elections. When a second round is organized, yielding the same results, Mandela resigns, prioritizing the principle of majority representation over personal interests. This act jeopardizes his career, reflecting the conflict between personal gains and commitment to the students. Mandela's stubborn sense of fairness and unwavering truthfulness drive him to sacrifice personal interests for what he regards as his obligation to the students (Mandela, 2013, p.61). His uprightness prevails as he stands by his decision to resign, even at the expense of his career at Fort Hare. These instances in the narrative illustrate Mandela's unwavering devotion and resolute honesty in pursuit of his life's goals, demonstrating his readiness to stake everything for his cause.

While the narrative portrays Mandela's unyielding and daring side, it equally illuminates his kind-heartedness and human nature. Many instances reveal Mandela's benevolence, extending not only

to fellow human beings but also encompassing animals. Despite accusations of a violence-provoking nature, Mandela's aversion to taking life is evident, including even the killing of a snake, an act that disgusts him in the narrative immensely, as he writes that he did not "like killing any living thing, even those creatures that fill some people with dread." (Mandela, 2013, p.218) He believes every living being, even those that induce fear and can act as a source of threat to others, has a right to life given by the creator. Mandela emphasizes that individuals should not consider it their right to kill these creatures.

In a later episode, while leading an underground life and commanding a guerrilla force, Mandela takes a shot at a bird. Despite the context of warfare, a child's criticism of the act deeply shames him, revealing his inner kindness censuring the killing of a bird. Mandela admits feeling that the child exhibited more humanity, Mandela's "mood immediately [shifts] from one of pride to shame; [Mandela feels] that this small boy had far more humanity than [he] did." (Mandela, 2013, p.335) Despite the demands of warfare, Mandela's remorse and guilt for taking the life of an inarticulate are inevitable, contrasting with his professional demands. The narrative indicates that Mandela's inner self and self-concept react strongly to such incidents, showcasing his inclination for love, inclusivity, and the enduring warmth and tenderness of his heart for all mankind. Aligning with Maslow's notion that self-actualizers are loving and creative individuals, realistic and productive (as cited in Friedman, Schustack, 217), these characteristics are evident in Mandela's personality, as revealed in the narrative of "Long Walk to Freedom."

Mandela's life unfolds as a testament to his enduring commitment to virtues such as humility, modesty, and patience. Integral to this narrative is the profound impact of interactions with society and surroundings in shaping an individual's self-concept—a foundational element influencing behavior, cognition, and emotions, as posited by Allen in 2006 (p.206). Mandela's self-concept, rooted in learned concepts and values attached to 'I' and 'me', aligns with his experiencing self, establishing congruence. This congruence, evident in his adherence to these values, contributes to a higher level of actualizing tendency, fostering both maturity and psychological adjustments (Allen, 2006, p.207).

Mandela's narrative unfolds experiences that reflect the characteristics fundamental to a self-actualized person, providing a sense of self against the objective world. His beliefs about the self and consciousness emerge from the phenomenal world around him, deeply embedded in his subjective experiences. The consistent alignment of his values with his self-concept contributes to the development of these traits, portraying Mandela as a person on the path toward *self-actualization*.

#### **4.2.Mandela's Sense of the Phenomenal World**

Mandela's narrative in "Long Walk to Freedom" circumambulates his subjectivity, evolving amidst discriminatory practices, oppressive regulations, unjustifiable distinctions, conceited attitudes, and supercilious behavior of the whites. His experiences, the phenomenal world around him, of oppression and humiliation foster mindfulness of his subservient standing in a society led by white hegemony, propelling him towards politicization and a determination to liberate himself and his nation from the shackles of slavery. Confronting the stark color distinctions in Africa, Mandela's consciousness rejects white supremacy, choosing resistance over compliance.

The narrative recounts instances of Mandela's political inclination and defiance against government laws, particularly during his tenure at the Witkins law firm. Observing Gaur, a black fellow lawyer, immersed in politics and revolutionary ideas, Mandela starts attending ANC meetings, witnessing the organization's efforts to improve conditions for black Africans. Mandela undergoes a transformation in consciousness, rejecting unquestioning subservience and aspiring

to more than material success. The narrative explicitly unveils, over multiple chapters, why Mandela [finds himself] “*being drawn into the world of politics because [he] was not content with [his] old beliefs.*” (Mandela, 2013, p.102) Gradually, he becomes a staunch supporter of the ANC charter, viewing politics not merely as impassioned speeches but as a realm demanding a willingness “to suffer and sacrifice.” (Mandela, 2013, p.119).

In the face of unfair treatment, oppression, and bias within the legal system dominated by whites, ‘Mandela and Tambo’, a law firm run by blacks, Mandela witnessed numerous instances of African people being mistreated by whites. Mandela, deeply affected by these injustices, felt intense anger, indignation, and resentment toward the white community. He expressed this emotional turmoil in simple yet powerful terms, stating, my frustration was directed towards white people, the oppressors, not towards the concept of racism itself” (Mandela, 2013, p.129). Some members of the ANC, such as Z.K. Mathews, characterized Mandela and his peers as passionate advocates willing to face the consequences for their beliefs (Mandela, 2013, p.131)

“Long Walk to Freedom” unfolds the concept of awareness, portraying Mandela as open to all experiences, learning from them, and living in the “here and now without rigid preconceptions, doing what feels right after weighing available information.” (Allen, 2006, p.206) The narrative illustrates the development of this awareness, leading to the emergence of a freedom fighter who, having made sense of the world around him deems it right to combat white oppression. This adjustment of consciousness evolves through continual reflection on experiences with the phenomenal world.

Witnessing continuous experiences of suppression, immorality, and irrationality, Mandela's consciousness becomes agitated, leading him to seek new ways to counteract the oppressive forces. The narrative delves into the intricacies of Mandela's political journey, highlighting how he gradually learns from the persistent fruitlessness of his efforts that “it is the oppressor who defines the nature of the struggle.” (Mandela, 2013, p.194)

Carl Rogers (1995) in his book “*On Becoming a Person*” gives an insight into a person's mind that it is, actually, he, himself, who knows best “what hurts, what direction to go, what problems are crucial, what experiences are deeply buried,” (pp.11-12) in the consciousness which later act as a beacon of cognizance, making a sense of the essence of felt experience. A self-actualized person, with the repertoire of his achieved consciousness based on the phenomenal world, continuously devises and seeks new solutions to improve the situation. The narrative unfolds Mandela's conscious efforts to concoct new strategies, discarding the old ones, as he faces challenges in the fight against white viciousness dominance on the continent. His consciousness, shaped by experiences, leads him to the realization that “at a certain point, one can only fight fire with fire.” (Mandela, 2013, p.194) This relentless attainment of sagacity, honed by assimilating the essence of experiences, whether of failure or accomplishment, is the process of making of a personality which later proved to be larger than life. This sense of the phenomenal world guided Mandela throughout his journey of self-actualization and later performing as a fully-functional person.

#### **4.3. Peak Experiences**

Mandela's "Long Walk to Freedom" not only outlines his worldly journey but implicitly portrays his inner odyssey marked by peak experiences and revelations. The narrative unfolds many experiences that are revelatory for Mandela, providing a profound intellect of grasping a situation, command of comprehension, and intimate connection with the people around him. Abraham Maslow defines “peak experiences as mystical experiences” usually considered as enlightening, sometimes quite indescribable, fleeting and momentary, exhilarating, and “*truth-illuminating*

*spiritual happenings.*” (as cited in Friedman, Schustack, 2015, p.217). Mandela's narrative offers glimpses into these subtle emotional experiences that propel him towards purpose and devotion, guiding him on the path leading to self-actualization.

Mandela, the freedom fighter, embarks on a journey of resistance and revolution, finding a profound sense of accomplishment and ecstasy in his initial protests against government atrocities. Even amid formidable odds, each small achievement instills in him unwavering fortitude, reigniting his resilience. The narrative describes Mandela's lofty fulfillment in words that “to march with one’s people was exhilarating and inspiring,” (Mandela, 2013, p.100) for him and inculcated a sense of unmatched satisfaction in his consciousness. Referred to as a rabble-rousing speaker, Mandela finds elation in addressing his people, experiencing occasional peaks akin to Maslow's concept of peak experiences, which contributes to his passion for the fight for freedom. Maslow posits that peak experiences are common in those inclined toward self-actualization, “the insights of these epiphanies provide help to maintain a mature personality.” (as cited in Friedman, Schustack, 2015, p.217) Mandela's dedication to the struggle against white supremacy becomes a nourishment for his soul, the sporadic peak experiences ensure bringing a sense of accomplishment and inner satisfaction, integral to the journey of a self-actualized person. (Mandela, 2013, p.160) Maslow's concept of peak experiences, as described by Engler (2009), emphasizes the lasting essence of an experience that transforms understanding, leaving a profound impact on the consciousness of the person, as in his arguments such experiential revelation “lingers on and transforms one’s understanding so that things do not seem to be quite the same afterward.” (p.350) Mandela's narrative echoes this idea when he recounts an incident in Cape Town, observing a white beggar woman scavenging for food in deplorable conditions. Mandela is deeply moved by her destitute, challenging his preconceptions, where he cannot fathom a supreme-race white as a mendicant. He describes this encounter as a truth-illuminating experience, a revelation that alters his perception of the supremely blessed white race, juxtaposed against the century-long accepted destitute of the blacks. Mandela's heart reaches out to the white beggar, prompting him to reconsider the disparity based on race in the societal norms. This peak experience reveals the injustices of apartheid, highlighting the skewed acceptance of black poverty while deeming white poverty as a tragedy. (Mandela, 2013, p.219)

An additional episode contributing to Mandela's peak experiences involves his flight with Ethiopian Airways to Addis, piloted by a black man. Initially, struck with panic, Mandela questions the capabilities of the black pilot, given the societal perception that high-tech roles are reserved for whites. However, as the plane safely takes off, Mandela reflects on his unfounded fears, acknowledging his unwitting submission to the apartheid mindset that considers Africans as inferior and restricts certain professions to white individuals. (Mandela, 2013, p.348)

Maslow's concept of peak experiences, as discussed by Friedman and Schustack (2015, p.218), is demonstrated in Mandela's autobiography, emphasizing that these moments are not limited to sacred realms but are integral to everyday life. Despite Mandela's role as a freedom fighter championing Black African equality, these peak experiences prompt a reevaluation of his own consciousness concerning the standing of blacks in society. Beyond enhancing Mandela's vision, these experiences instilled in him a profound sense of unity and meaning, as indicated by Engler (2009, p.350).

Peak experiences bring consummation, relevance, and meaningfulness to enhance and consolidate the essence of a self-actualized person's soul, allowing Mandela to discern his shortcomings and those of the people around him. These instances, in alignment with existentialist ideals, become reasons to live a fully functional life, fostering growth in understanding and a transformed

perspective (Rogers, 1995, p.166). Mandela's narrative in "Long Walk to Freedom" unveils these episodes of peak experiences, offering glimpses into his inner journey of self-actualization and the pursuit of a fully functional life. Through these subjective encounters, Mandela continually reshapes his consciousness, achieving inner harmony through ongoing interaction with the phenomenal field and the myriad transformations of experience.

### 5. Conclusion

This research paper exclusively conducted an organismic evaluation of the subjective experiences and inner potential that contribute to the development of a self-actualized individual who later performs as a fully functional individual. A fully functional person, as represented by the self-concept and its congruence along with the peak experiences that are mentioned in Nelson Mandela's autobiographical narrative, "Long Walk to Freedom", evidently expounds the making of Mandela. The narrative's delineations of these qualities are navigated through this research with the lens of the Humanistic phenomenological approach provided by Carl Rogers and Abraham Maslow.

The recalled memory of the events, in the autobiography "Long Walk to Freedom" by Mandela, intensely elaborates and explicates the challenges and experiences that shaped Mandela into a legendary political figure. This research highlighted the circumstances that influenced his awareness, consciousness, and understanding of the phenomenal field, in addition, it revealed, both overtly and subtly, the subjective and peak experiences that contributed to his personal self-concept and political growth throughout life.

The research paper first delves deep into a scrutiny of self-concept and its congruence with reality as portrayed in the initial chapters of the autobiography. Leafing through myriad of experiences, this paper tried to pull out the propensities and proclivities, in terms of virtues, strengths, and weaknesses, of Mandela's nature, as penned down by himself, that served to strengthen his character, as defined by humanistic psychologists, of being a self-actualized personality. Throughout the time of youth, continuous interference with unjustifiable norms led his consciousness revolt and change, a sign of a self-actualizing individual who keeps on updating his repertoire of knowledge based on his phenomenal world, so that he could navigate through the world performing at his best.

Initially, Mandela considered the whites as their benefactors and could not fathom the ruthlessness and callousness with which they were administering the whole race of blacks keeping them subservient and lowly. Witnessing this callousness, Mandela's ideas got politicized and his self-actualizing self, made him move from an acquiescent follower of white dominancy to a rabble-raising speaker and a cognizant leader.

The narrative also subtly surfaces such events which can be considered as the "peak experiences", as they play a pivotal role in the rearranging and attainment of consciousness, self-satisfaction, and enlightening. As the Existentialists proclaim, these characteristics keeps a self-actualized person motivated and working toward the attainment of his life goals. This research highlights such peak experiences where Mandela is awe-struck, and had to think for a moment to alter his stereotypical beliefs. These subjective experiences and his attained consciousness sculpted him into a fully functional person, who learnt to forgive his enemies and to work with them, because he knew that if he hated them, they will have him under control forever.

Taking into consideration the relevant data one is inevitably led to the conclusion that Mandela's autobiography portrayed the development of his personality from becoming a *self-actualized* person towards attaining the characteristics of a *fully functional person*. This journey towards the achievement of a *fully functional person* is interspersed with *peak experiences* and continuous

stratification of cognition based on the knowledge attained through Mandela's experiences. Hence, these experiences served as the building blocks of subjectivity and acted as the bedrock of knowledge upon which Mandela built his consciousness and shaped his cognition.

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