

SELF-ACTUALIZATION
IN MOHSIN HAMID'S NOVEL EXIT WEST (2017)

THESIS

Submitted as Partial Fulfillment of The Requirement to Obtain
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


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ABSTRAK

Alifia, Tiara. 2022. “Achieving Self-actualization in Mohsin Hamid’s Novel Exit West (2017). Thesis. Jurusan Bahasa dan Sastra Inggris. Fakultas Bahasa dan Seni Universitas Negeri Padang.

Skripsi ini merupakan hasil analisa dari novel Exit West (2017) yang ditulis oleh Mohsin Hamid. Permasalahan yang diangkat dari analisa novel ini adalah usaha untuk mendapatkan self-actualization yang dialami oleh para pengungsi. Analisa ini berkaitan dengan konsep hierarki kebutuhan oleh Abraham Maslow. Analisa ini berfokus pada usaha protagonis dalam meraih self-actualization. Tujuan dari analisa ini adalah untuk mengetahui sejauh mana elemen fiksi seperti konflik, setting dan karakter memperlihatkan rintangan dan perjuangan dalam meraih self-actualization. Hasil dari analisa ini adalah untuk memperlihatkan bentuk dari self-actualization berdasarkan pada kriteria dan karakteristiknya. Self-actualization diperoleh setelah memenuhi kebutuhan fisiologis, kebutuhan akan rasa aman, kebutuhan untuk dicintai dan memiliki, dan kebutuhan untuk dihargai.

Kata kunci: hierarki kebutuhan, human motivation, self-actualization.

ABSTRACT

Alifia, Tiara. 2022. “Achieving Self-actualization in Mohsin Hamid’s Novel Exit West (2017). Thesis. Jurusan Bahasa dan Sastra Inggris. Fakultas Bahasa dan Seni Universitas Negeri Padang.

This thesis is an analysis of the novel Exit West (2017) by Mohsin Hamid. This analysis is related to psychological approach, using the concept hierarchy of needs by Abraham Maslow. The problem of this analysis focuses on the protagonists’ obstacles and also their struggle to achieve self-actualization. This analysis aims to find out through conflict, setting, and characters, the protagonists’ obstacles and endeavors in order to achieve self-actualization. The result of the study shows the form of self-actualization based on the criteria and characteristics. Self-actualization is obtained after fulfilled the physiology need, safety need, love and belonging need, and self-esteem need.

Keywords: human motivation, self-actualization, the hierarchy of needs.

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In the name Allah SWT, The Beneficent, The Merciful. All of honors are just for Allah SWT, the writer is eventually able to finish this Thesis, entitled Achieving Self-Actualization in Mohsin Hamid's Novel's Exit West (2017). The writer also sends sholawat and salam to the prophet Muhammad SAW.

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The Writer

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Motivation is something that stimulates a person to take an action. That action will gradually form the human's behaviour or habit which also indirectly impacts their psychological development. Yet, motivation can come from humans or their environment. Being motivated means to shed the appropriate action and thought to fulfil the goals. (Beye, 1997)

Human motivation is related to human needs. Need is the main motive of a human to move. Need is the condition within the individuals that forced them to improve. This situation will slowly proceed mental strength. As the citation below said:

“Needs are conditions within the individual that are essential and necessary for the maintenance of life and the nurturance of growth and well-being. Hunger and thirst exemplify two biological needs that arise from the body's requirement for food and water. These are required nutriments for the maintenance of life.”
(Shouders, 2021)

Usually, the first thing that stimulates humans is their desire to survive and keep themselves alive. The basic things that humans need are oxygen to keep them breathing, food to satisfy the feeling of hunger, etc. There is five hierarchy of needs that motivate humans in their process of

growing. Start from basic needs that consist of physiological and safety needs, then move to the psychological needs that consist of love and belonging and self-esteem needs, and the higher step is self-actualization needs.(Maslow, 1943)

Each stage of human motivation has different defiance that takes various periods of time. It could be so hard to complete basic needs for some people and might affect their focus on that stage, then set aside psychological needs or vice versa. As in the five hierarchies of needs, self-actualization is the last and final stage. Achieving self-actualization is not easy because people must be going through a complicated process which probably takes a lifetime.

However, it becomes more complicated to achieve self-actualization, especially for the people who leave their country. For instance are migrants who are obliged to move because of economy, education or even political reason. For the migrants they have to adapt to the new culture and social environment, it will make them take more time in the stage of love and belonging need. Another example is an asylum-seeker who has left their country and seeking protection from prosecution and serious human rights violations. It can be recognized as a deprivation of their security need.

Then the other one is refugees who have fled to another country because their government cannot guarantee their safety. It is usually the impact of war. In that situation, those refugees cannot control their life anymore. Since they left without bringing anything, hoping the volunteers would help them. It

might be considered a human rights deprivation. It is prone for them to start over their hierarchy of needs since they leave their previous life which may be already stable. Still, they don't have any better choice in their hand but leave without taking anything to save their life.

There are many cases about refugees issue, as the article that is releases by UNHCR (The UN Refugee Agency) entitled Severe food shortages hit Africa's refugees hard, UNHCR and WFP warn (2017) states:

“The Executive Director of the World Food Programme (WFP), Ertharin Cousin, and the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, Filippo Grandi, are very concerned that critical shortages in food assistance are affecting some 2 million refugees in 10 countries across Africa. The shortages could worsen in coming months without new resources to meet food needs.” (UNHCR, 2017)

The quotation reflects how difficult for some refugees to fulfil their physiological needs. Those refugees cannot afford their food by themselves. They cannot satisfy their hunger since the food is difficult to get. Their only hope is just for people to sympathise with them day by day. Those refugees are fully dependent on the volunteer and the government's mercy. This also means that some refugees are stuck in the first step of human motivation.

Another case about these issues is written by Physiophedia, entitled Mental Health and Refugees:

Some studies on refugees in western countries showed that 9% suffered from PTSD and around 5% from depression. However, there were also studies that obtained results showing 30% among tested cases whom suffered from PTSD. These findings

suggest that most refugees are in a traumatized state and are in need of counseling. (Pysiophedia, n.d.)

This shows how the refugees also suffer from psychological needs because of their miserable situation. This case also describes that their trauma restrains them from stepping onto the stage of love and belonging, self-esteem and even self-actualization. Since the trauma mostly causes the people to distrust themselves. Then it will be more difficult to trust and love others.

As there are many refugee cases found in the world. Those are also many authors who are inspired by this phenomenon and started to write literary works discussing refugees and their struggle in achieving self-actualization. Those literary works may be in the form of prose, poetry, drama and even movie. This thesis focuses on the novel written by Mohsin Hamid, *Exit West* (2017). The analysis in this study is classified based on the difficulties that the refugees have to face as well as their endeavors.

The main characters in this novel are Saeed and Nadia who are forced to be refugees by the situation. This analysis refers to everything that Saeed and Nadia face till they can settle down on their knees, started from achieving the basic needs and slowly reaching the psychological needs. Then lead the protagonists to have their own definition of a healthy personality. At the beginning of the story, the novel shows a chaotic country but the wheel of life is still active. The citizens are very familiar with hearing the bomb and shooting. It is just like a lullaby in their ears until the situation becomes a major

war where people die, the street is full of tanks and soldiers and every sector stops operating. This situation forced Saeed and Nadia to leave their homeland and be refugees. In that situation in their country, Saeed and Nadia leave without any proper preparation yet endure the risk that may occur in the future.

However, their exit from their homeland in such a situation just prevents them from their journey to achieving self-actualization. Saeed and Nadia have to start over their stages of needs all over again. In this case, the first stage that they have to fulfil is security needs. Since saving their lives from the guns and bombs in their homeland is the most important thing. They also face the risk of mental illness since war causes much trauma. And living in a camp can ignite frustration. Here, it can be seen that the characters in this novel manage to deal with every obstacle and then gain their basic and psychological needs to achieve self-actualization.

There are two articles related to the novel *Exit West* (2017) by Mohsin Hamid. First is the study by Asherly Randa (2020) entitled *At the Crossroad of Identity in Mohsin Hamid's novel Exit West (2017)*. This study deals with the concept of hybridity by Homi K. Bhaba which shows that most refugees have to assimilate and imitate the new culture to survive. The second is the study entitled *From National to Global Identity: Effects of Migration on the Individual in Mohsin Hamid's Exit West* written by Hannah Van den Bosch (2020). It focuses on human rights and humanizes refugees.

1.2 Problem of the Study

The analysis of this study focuses on the achieving self-actualization as the highest stages of human motivation in Maslow's hierarchy of needs in novel *Exit West* (2017) by Mohsin Hamid. There are two research questions that give contribution to reveal the issue. The research question formulated as follows:

1. What are the obstacles in achieving self-actualization in novel *Exit West* (2017) by Mohsin Hamid?
2. What are the endeavors that the characters do to achieve self-actualization in novel *Exit West* (2017) by Mohsin Hamid?

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The aim of this study is to seek the obstacles that prevent the characters achieve their self-actualization. This study also investigates to the endeavors that the characters in novel *Exit West* (2017) by Mohsin Hamid do to achieve self-actualization

CHAPTER II

THEORITICAL FRAMEWORK

In analyzing the novel *Exit West* by Mohsin Hamid, the theory of human motivation is used. Human motivation is a part of the psychoanalysis approach in literary studies. Human motivation means the motive behind the act of the human itself to satisfy their desires. Along with the theory of human motivation, Maslow explained that human motivation is based on their needs which are classified into hierarchies.

“People are motivated to achieve certain needs and that some needs take precedence over others. Our most basic need is for physical survival, and this will be the first thing that motivates our behavior. Once that level is fulfilled the next level up is what motivates us, and so on.” (Maslow, 1943)

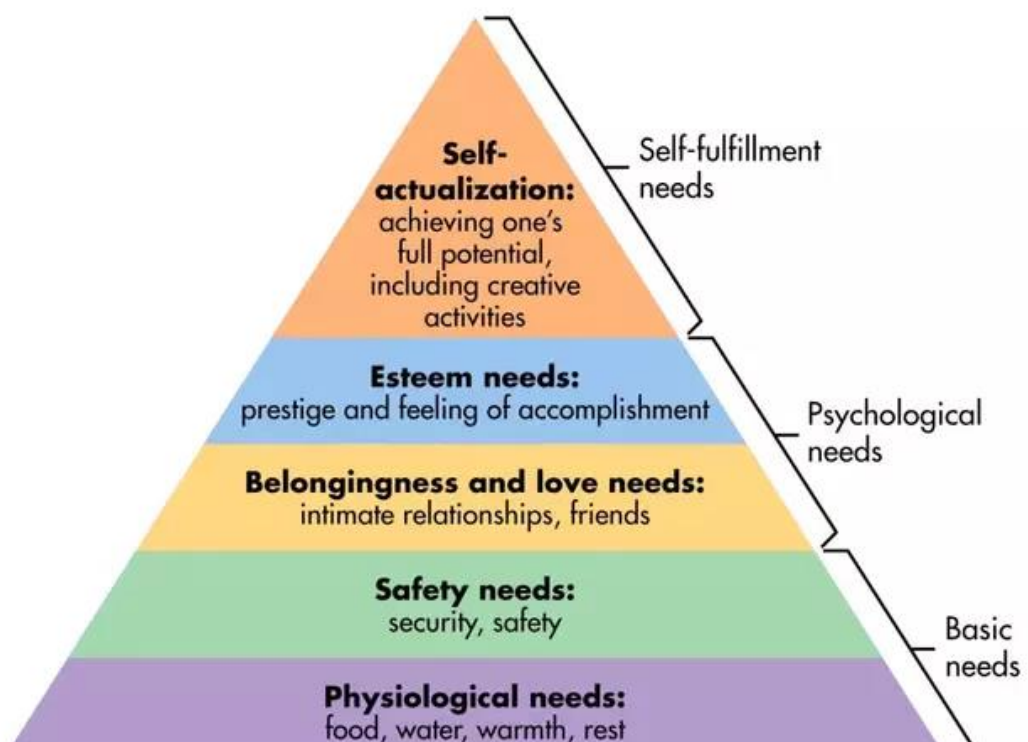
According to the quotation above, to survive and live their life, human has a motive for every behavior. That motive is based on their needs. Maslow divided those needs into five stages and called them the hierarchy of needs. Those hierarchies consist of basic needs such as physiological and safety needs, psychological needs such as belongings and esteem needs and the last one is self-fulfillment needs such as self-actualization.

2.1 Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs

Human motivation is based on fulfillment and change through personal growth. Human motivation usually comes from their needs. Maslow (1943)

illustrates that needs into a pyramid that is conical on the top. The base represent physiology need, the next step after that is safety need, the third level is love and belonging need, followed with self-esteem needs and self-actualization need on the very top of it.

To make it more understandable Maslow made this illustration:



Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (Source: www.simplypsychology.org)

a. Physiological Needs:

The most fundamental need in Maslow's hierarchy is physiological need. This need is the priority that must be fulfilled repeatedly. Physiological need is also very substantial that the individuals naturally

fulfilled this need first before the other basic need. Physiological need refers to the needs of air, oxygen, food, water, clothes, health, and sex. When physiological need already satisfied, the individuals will be motivated to move to the higher need which is called safety and security needs.

b. Safety Needs

Safety and security needs arise to protect the individuals from every danger situation around them. The needs include the feeling to be liberated from physical attack, dependency, diseases, anxiety and also dangerous situation like war and terrorism. The form of these needs are stability, security, law, rules and property. According to Maslow, the individuals who cannot satisfy these needs would avoid unfamiliar situation. Physiological and safety needs are called as basic needs.

c. Social Belonging and Love Needs

Once the basic needs obtained stably, human being will be motivated to move to the other stage categorized as psychological needs. Those needs consist of love and belonging needs and self-esteem needs. Love and belonging needs are the needs to love and to be loved. This need refers to have friends, having partners and offspring, intimacy, healthy family and sense of connection. The individuals that satisfied this need will remain solid when they are broken. Those individuals would aware that they will never be loved by everyone, but the closest and the most important people would love them for

who they are. According to Maslow, the individuals must be understood of the definition of love, and willing to spread the love. Therefore, the world would be free from hatred and violation.

d. Self Esteem Needs

The next stage is self-esteem need. According to Maslow, self-esteem need divided into two categories which are self-respect and respect from others. Self-respect means that the individuals need to understand themselves, that they have their own strength and weakness. It refers to freedom, competence, self-confidence, and independent. Meanwhile, respect from others is related to respect, status, recognition, and even domination. It is important to gain self-respect first and being respected by skill more than background.

After the individuals gain self-esteem they will naturally move to the highest level of the hierarchy that is known as self-actualization needs. Self-actualization is categorized as self-fulfillment which is the desire to become the best version of one-self.

e. Self-Actualization Needs

As in Maslow's theory of human motivation, self-actualization represents the highest level of human growth. Maslow stated that:

“Self-actualization (also referred to as self-realization or self-cultivation) can be described as the complete realization of one's potential as manifest in peak experiences which involve the full development of one's abilities and appreciation for life.” (Maslow, 1943)

People usually define self-actualization as a desire that tend to develop their skill and maximize their potential. Yet, that concept is very general based on the criterias that Maslow thinks an individual has to have in that self-actualization step. Those criteria are:

1. Stepping up into all the hierarchy of needs.
2. Having B-values or metamotivation which are truth, goodness, beauty, wholeness, aliveness, uniqueness, perfection, completion, justice, simplicity, totality, persistent, playfulness and self-sufficiency. (Schultz, 1991)
3. Dispose the meta pathologies that is the state of frustration experienced by individuals who are unable to satisfy their metamotivation. (Schultz, 1991)
4. Fulfill the need to grow and doing the best that the individuals can do. (Maslow, 2006)

Maslow also noted that everyone can stand on the top of the hierarchy of needs which is self-actualization. He means that whether that person is rich or poor, educated or uneducated, the self-actualization will be fit and following the people profile (Coon,2007). The characteristics of the self-actualizer are as follow:

- 1) Efficient perception of reality means that people who reach self-actualization stage are able to judge situations correctly. They do not like dishonest and see the reality as it is.

- 2) Comfortable acceptance of self, others, and nature. This means that self-actualizers have big tolerance towards any difference and contradictions, they even accept that their nature and its flaws. They also able to express it with humor.
- 3) Reliant on own experiences and judgment.
- 4) Spontaneous and natural.
- 5) Task centering. Able to handle the problem that is even beyond themselves. They can always fulfill what they needs with their own way.
- 6) Autonomy. Independent and resourceful.
- 7) Continued freshness of appreciation. Constantly having appreciation towards life's basic goods.
- 8) Profound interpersonal relationship. Marked by deep bonds.
- 9) Comfort with solitude. Self-actualizers usually comfort and solitude being alone.
- 10) Non-hostile sense of humor.
- 11) Peak experiences. Marked by feeling at one with the universe, stronger and calmer than ever before, filled with light, beauty, goodness.
- 12) Socially compassionate. Possessing humanity.
- 13) Few friends. Having few intimates friends.

In conclusion, people who already reach the stage of self-actualization finally can wash away all of the anxiety and fulfilling their life comfortably.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

Self-actualization stands in the highest level of hierarchy of needs. It is obvious that to obtain this step, people should face much variety of struggles. Since there are four other steps below self-actualization which is physiological needs, security needs, love and belonging needs, and self-esteem need. In every step people will find varieties obstacles and those are must be solve or they will just stuck in that step. Self-actualization signifies that people are growing in psychological side. Once people step into this need, it will make them having healthy personality.

Saeed and Nadia both in the end can reach the step of self-actualization. They meet the four criteria of self-actualization. First, they already stepping up into all the hierarchy of needs, they also passed the difficulties in every step of the hierarchy. Second, as long as their journey through some countries, Nadia and Saeed have the B-values, although those values are arise step by step. Third, Nadia and Saeed can dispose the metapathologies that is the stage of frustration experienced which is showed in how they passed all the difficulties. And the last, they also fulfill the need to grow and doing the best that they can do.

Some of the characteristics of self-actualization are also appear in Nadia and Saeed. Those characteristics are efficient perception of reality, acceptance of self and others, reliant on own experiences and judgment,

spontaneous and natural, autonomy, profound interpersonal relationship, comfort with solitude, non-hostile sense of humor and having few friends. Although not all the characteristics of self-actualization are appear in Nadia and Saeed characterization, they can be categorized as self-actualizes. Since they already passed all the step in the hierarchy of needs, and more than half of the self-actualization characteristics are appear in their characterization.

From the discussion we can conclude that Saeed and Nadia in the end can achieve their self-actualization. There are so many things happened in their past live, the experienced of starving, shooting gun and bombing, losing their beloved one. However, Saeed and Nadia never give up for their life, they give it all to be live and get better life. Their journey are so long and tiring, but with their determination they can step into the higher place of human motivation which is self-actualization.

Last, the writer expects to give contribution to the readers especially for English Literature students. The writer also hopes that the readers would be more appreciated the work of literatures as a way to get more lesson to something new, not just as entertainment. . The writer knows that this study is not perfect and lacking here and there, so it is expected there is further research to use the Maslow's hierarchy of needs.

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