

**ANALYSIS OF THE MAIN CHARACTER'S
SELF-ACTUALIZATION IN THE NOVEL *DAYS AT THE
MORISAKI BOOKSHOP***

THESIS

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UNIVERSITAS ISLAM NEGERI MAULANA MALIK
IBRAHIM MALANG**

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THESIS

Presented to
Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang
In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of *Sarjana Sastra (S.S)*

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2025

STATEMENT OF AUTHORSHIP

I state that the thesis entitled "*Analysis of the Main Character's Self-Actualization in the Novel Days at the Morisaki Bookshop*" is my original work. I do not include any materials previously written or published by another person, except those cited as references and written in the bibliography. Hereby, if there is any objection or claim, I am the only person who is responsible for that.

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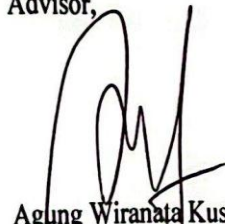
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MOTTO

In one week, you feel better. In one month, your life starts to change. And yes, you make mistakes. You will be tired again. That's okay, it's part of life. But then, you still choose **Brave**

Brave is not about not having fear. It is about choosing to keep moving forward even though fear walks beside you. When your heart is uncertain, your hands tremble, and all kinds of bad possibilities swirl around in your head, you still stand up and try even though the road ahead seems dark. .

-Vincilya Fildania

DEDICATION

With an outpouring of love and support, I present this thesis to:

The most Olympian support in my life,

as my lovely mother, Sunarsih, and my father, Agus Hidayat,

My pretty beloved sister, Lelya Vega Ernisya,

My best companions and prayer warriors, Grandma Suratmi and Grandpa Kuwat,

My professional extraordinary Advisor, Agung Wiranata Kusuma, M.A.

All my friends always provide motivation and support,

And for myself, Vincilya Fildania.

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Salawat and salam were continuously poured out on Prophet Muhammad SAW, and peace and blessings be upon him, along with his family, friends, and followers, until the end of time. The thesis entitled *Analysis of the Main Character's Self-Actualization in the Novel Days at the Morisaki Bookshop* was made to meet one of the requirements for achieving a degree of *Sarjana Sastra* (S.S) in the Department of English Literature, Faculty of Humanities, Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang.

Completing the thesis was made possible with the participation of those who have provided endless motivation, counsel, and support. Therefore, with deep gratitude and appreciation, the researcher would like to extend thanks to all who have contributed to the drafting of this thesis:

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3. Head of the English Literature Department, Dr. Agwin Degaf, M.A.
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Thank you for your dedication and contribution to the shining nation.

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8. Lastly, for the sleepless nights, the invisible tears, the unheard complaints, the blurry hopes that remain tightly held, thank you for surviving so far, collecting the desired puzzle of life, and bringing yourself to be stronger. I hope that the knowledge you get can always bring you goodness in the future. You deserve all the good things ahead. Please love yourself today and forever, Vincilya.

The researcher realized that many shortcomings still need to be corrected and improved in preparing this thesis. For that, the researcher hopes that there will be input for this thesis and further research appropriate to the issue or object of this thesis. The researcher hopes this thesis may benefit the researcher, family, and the wider community.

Malang, 09 September 2025

The Researcher

Vincilya Fildania

ABSTRACT

Fildania, Vincilya (2025). *Analysis of the Main Character's Self-Actualization in the Novel Days at the Morisaki Bookshop*. Undergraduate Thesis, Department of English Literature, Faculty of Humanities, Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang. Advisor: Agung Wiranata Kusuma, M.A.

Keyword: Self-actualization, Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, Character Development

Self-actualization is an important topic in psychology and literature, focusing on how individuals grow through challenges and reflection. This study aims to analyze how books and bookstores can support the process of fulfilling Maslow's hierarchy of needs and contribute to the journey of self-actualization. This study uses a literary psychology approach with a descriptive qualitative method. Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs theory serves as the main framework for analyzing and interpreting relevant quotes from the novel that reflect the stages of needs, from physiological to self-actualization. The results of the analysis show that bookstores function not only as a physical setting but also as a symbolic space that provides emotional security, social connection, and personal growth. Furthermore, through reading, the characters in the novel gradually fulfill their psychological needs until they achieve self-awareness and life purpose. In conclusion, this novel effectively depicts the process of healing and the journey toward self-actualization, in line with Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs theory.

مستخلص البحث

فيلدنيا، فينسليليا ٢٠٢٥. تحليل تحقيق الذات للشخصية الرئيسية في رواية أيام في مكتبة موريساكي، أطروحة، قسم الأدب الإنجليزي، كلية العلوم الإنسانية، جامعة مولانا مالك إبراهيم الإسلامية الحكومية مالانج. المشرف: أغونغ ويراناتا كوسوما، ماجستير.

الكلمات المفتاحية: تحقيق الذات، هرم ماسلو للاحتياجات، تنمية الشخصية

تحقيق الذات هو موضوع مهم في علم النفس والأدب، يركز على كيفية نمو الأفراد من خلال التحديات والتفكير. تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى تحليل كيف يمكن للكتب والمكتبات أن تدعم عملية تحقيق هرم ماسلو للاحتياجات وتساهم في رحلة تحقيق الذات. تستخدم هذه الدراسة نهجاً أدبياً نفسياً مع طريقة وصفية نوعية تُستخدم نظرية هرم ماسلو للحاجات كإطار عمل رئيسي لتحليل وتفسير الاقتباسات ذات الصلة من الرواية التي تعكس مراحل الحاجات، من الحاجات الفسيولوجية إلى تحقيق الذات. تظهر نتائج التحليل أن المكتبات لا تعمل فقط كبيئة مادية، بل كفضاء رمزي يوفر الأمان العاطفي والتواصل الاجتماعي والنمو الشخصي علاوة على ذلك، من خلال قراءة الكتب، يلبي بطل الرواية تدريجياً احتياجاته النفسية حتى يصل إلى الوعي الذاتي والهدف في الحياة. في الختام، تصور هذه الرواية بشكل فعال عملية الشفاء والرحلة نحو تحقيق الذات بما يتماشى مع نظرية هرم الاحتياجات لـ ماسلو.

ABSTRAK

Fildania, Vincilya (2025). Analisis Aktualisasi Diri Tokoh Utama dalam Novel *Days at the Morisaki Bookshop*. Skripsi, Jurusan Sastra Inggris, Fakultas Humaniora, Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang. Dosen Pembimbing: Agung Wiranata Kusuma, M.A.

Kata kunci: Aktualisasi Diri, Hierarki Kebutuhan Maslow, Perkembangan Karakter

Aktualisasi diri merupakan topik penting dalam psikologi dan sastra, yang berfokus pada bagaimana individu tumbuh melalui tantangan dan refleksi. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis bagaimana buku dan toko buku dapat menunjang proses pemenuhan hirarki kebutuhan Maslow dan berkontribusi pada perjalanan aktualisasi diri. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan psikologi sastra dengan metode kualitatif deskriptif. Teori Hirarki Kebutuhan Maslow menjadi kerangka utama untuk menganalisis dan menginterpretasi kutipan-kutipan relevan dari novel yang merefleksikan tahapan-tahapan kebutuhan, mulai dari fisiologis hingga aktualisasi diri. Hasil analisis menunjukkan bahwa toko buku berfungsi tidak hanya sebagai latar fisik, tetapi juga sebagai ruang simbolis yang menyediakan rasa aman emosional, koneksi sosial, dan pertumbuhan pribadi. Selain itu, melalui kegiatan membaca dari buku, karakter utama dalam novel secara bertahap memenuhi kebutuhan psikologisnya hingga mencapai kesadaran diri dan tujuan hidup. Sebagai kesimpulan, novel ini secara efektif menggambarkan proses penyembuhan dan perjalanan menuju aktualisasi diri, selaras dengan teori Hirarki Kebutuhan Maslow.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

STATEMENT OF AUTHORSHIP.....	ii
APPROVAL SHEET.....	iii
LEGITIMATION SHEET.....	iv
MOTTO.....	v
DEDICATION.....	vi
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT.....	vii
ABSTRACT (ENGLISH).....	ix
ABSTRACT (ARAB).....	x
ABSTRACT (INDONESIA).....	xi
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	
CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION.....	1
A. Background of the Study.....	1
B. Problem of the Study.....	7
C. Significance of the Study.....	7
D. Scope and Limitations.....	8
E. Definition of Key Terms.....	8
CHAPTER II REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE.....	10
A. Psychological Approach in Literary Criticism.....	10
B. Abraham Maslow's Theory.....	11
C. Abraham Maslow's Concept of the Hierarchy of Needs.....	13
D. Self-Actualization.....	16
CHAPTER III RESEARCH METHOD.....	23
A. Research Design.....	23
B. Data Source.....	23
C. Data Collection.....	24
D. Data Analysis.....	24
CHAPTER IV FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION.....	26
A. Overview of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs in the Novel.....	26
B. Fulfillment of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs by Takako.....	27

1. Fulfilling Psychological Needs.....	27
2. Fulfilling Safety Needs.....	31
3. Fulfilling Love and Belongingness.....	38
4. Fulfilling Self-Esteem.....	51
5. Fulfilling Self-Actualization.....	55
C. The Journey toward Self-Actualization.....	56
1. Acceptance of Reality.....	56
2. Emotional Honesty and Authenticity.....	57
3. Sense of Purpose and Growth.....	59
CHAPTER V CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS.....	61
A. Conclusions.....	61
B. Suggestions.....	61
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	63
CURRICULUM VITAE.....	66

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the study's background, problem, significance, scope, limitations, and definition of the key terms.

A. Background of the Study

Literature is a reflection of human life that not only presents stories but also represents the complexity of the psychological experience of the characters (Ally, 2021). Through literary works, readers can encounter various existential problems related to social relations, the search for the meaning of life, and self-identity (Wellek & Warren, 1956). One approach that can be used to understand the characters in literary works is the approach of literary psychology. This approach allows the reader to analyze the characters' motivation, personality, and psychological needs and uncover the inner dynamics that shape their life journey (Moghaddam, 2004).

One of the important concepts in psychology is self-actualization, which refers to the individual's process of reaching their maximum potential and becoming the best version of themselves. According to Compton (2024), self-actualization reflects personality development that involves a deep understanding of the self, acceptance, and continuous self-development. This concept is in line with the theory of Abraham Maslow (1943), who placed self-actualization as the top of the hierarchy of human needs. Self-actualization is not only concerned with personal

achievement but also includes contributions to society, reflection on life values, and awareness of one's strengths and weaknesses.

Furthermore, Maslow (1943) explained that the process of self-actualization is dynamic and complex, influenced by various factors such as life experience, social environment, and interaction with other people. Individuals who have reached a level of self-actualization usually show traits such as empathy, creativity, independence, as well as a high adaptability to change. This process also reflects a significant psychological transformation in the way of thinking, acting, and establishing social relationships. Therefore, understanding how a person meets their needs in Maslow's hierarchy can provide important insights into the human journey towards self-actualization.

In the context of literary works, the theme of self-actualization is often raised as the core of the narrative that describes the main character's journey in facing life's challenges and finding meaning for her existence. According to Musthofa (2022), literary works that raise this theme can be a reflection of how individuals struggle to meet their basic needs until they finally reach a full understanding of themselves. This process also shows how the main character undergoes positive changes, both in thought patterns and in social interactions, which strengthen her overall quality of life. The urgency of this research lies in the attempt to understand how literary works can represent the process of self-actualization as part of the human journey in developing full potential and finding purpose in life.

Satoshi Yagisawa's novel *Days at the Morisaki Bookshop* is a relevant object of study because it describes the main character who faces a variety of psychological, social, and identity challenges related to life goals. Through her interaction with books and the bookstore, this character undergoes a process of fulfillment of needs according to Maslow's hierarchy of needs, ultimately leading to significant self-change. By analyzing the journey of the main character in this novel, the research is expected to provide a deeper understanding of how humans can face difficulties, process, and grow towards a more meaningful life.

The selection of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs theory as an analytical framework in this study is based on its strong relevance to the theme of self-actualization in the novel. Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs is a theory for analyzing human needs, in which individuals seek to fulfill their potential and become the best version of themselves (Acquah et al., 2021). This theory not only provides a clear structure for understanding human needs but also allows an in-depth analysis of the character's journey in achieving potential. For example, using this theory, researcher find it interesting that Satoshi Yagisawa's novel *Days at the Morisaki Bookshop* emphasizes the relationship between the main character and the book or bookstore involved in the novel, which affects her concept of herself in her confusion, experience, and eventually develops personal changes for the better to meet her needs. Therefore, the theory of the hierarchy of needs will help to analyze and explore the needs that the main character has met, as well as the process they went through to reach the last stage in the hierarchy.

Satoshi Yagisawa's Novel *Days at the Morisaki Bookshop* was chosen as the object of research because it offers a rich and in-depth narrative about the main character's journey in meeting her needs through books and the bookstore. In particular, the main character in the novel is interesting in that it shows significant changes that can be seen in the plot. The story not only describes the challenges faced by the character, but also highlights how to act in the process of self-reflection and personal development. With such a powerful and complex background, the novel provides an ideal opportunity to apply Maslow's theory of the hierarchy of needs and explore how the main character goes towards self-actualization. Through this research, it is hoped that new insights can be generated about the relationship between literature and psychology, and literary works can be a mirror of the human journey to reach potential.

Some of these studies focus on analyzing the hierarchy of human needs based on Abraham Maslow's theory in various literary works. In particular, this research explores the main character's needs in novels. Research on the achievement of the needs of the main character certainly enters several stages, such as Zhao's research (2024), which aims to analyze the influence of social context on *Oliver Twist*'s psychological needs using qualitative descriptive methods. The results show that poverty and social barriers make it difficult for the main character to meet basic needs and hinder the process of self-actualization. Meanwhile, Rhamawati (2024) described the process of achieving self-actualization of Celia's character using a qualitative descriptive method. The results show that Celia achieved self-

actualization after struggling to meet the needs of love, appreciation, and independent courage.

Furthermore, Merrin (2024) analyzed Mariam's needs in the context of patriarchal marriage through a case study with text analysis. The results showed that Mariam achieved self-actualization by sacrificing her loved ones after the basic needs stage. On the other hand, Virginia (2022) connected the hierarchy of needs with the theme of optimism and emotional satisfaction using a qualitative descriptive method. This study found that the novel *Pollyanna* reflects Maslow's hierarchy, highlighting love and social relationships as a path to self-actualization.

In addition, Rudyanto's (2022) research discusses the character's journey through each stage of Maslow's needs using a qualitative descriptive method. The research found that the character experiences the stage of love and appreciation. Then, Mashkur (2023) analyzed the hierarchy of needs of the characters in the novel using a qualitative descriptive method. The findings indicate that the characters strive to fulfill most stages of needs despite facing internal and external conflicts.

Research focuses on specific needs, such as Mutiah's (2024) research analyzing the influence of love needs on the main character's actions using qualitative descriptive methods. The results show that the fulfillment of love needs brings harmony in the relationship, despite temporary social barriers. In addition, Tania (2024) analyzed the influence of appreciation needs on the main character's management and conflict through qualitative descriptive methods. The results show that the character struggles to fulfill the need for appreciation but faces obstacles

from social pressure and moral conflicts. Then, Silfanah (2024) analyzes the hierarchy of needs of the main character in the novel *American Royals* by Katharine McGee using descriptive analysis with a literary psychological approach. The results show that needs and love are fulfilled, but social status conflicts hinder self-actualization.

On the other hand, there has also been research showing the development of fictional characters with the relevance of Maslow's hierarchy of needs. Ahdiani (2023) explained how the hierarchy of needs builds self-actualization in the character of a child from a broken home family through a qualitative descriptive method. The results show that the character gradually meets basic needs and love and achieves self-actualization through emotional development and the courage to face trauma. The research focuses on the themes of optimism and emotional satisfaction.

From the previous studies, a theoretical research gap emerges in works that examined the fulfillment of character needs through Maslow's hierarchy (Maskhur, 2023; Merrin, 2024; Mustofa, Rudyanto, 2022; Zhao, 2024). However, these studies remained general and did not provide a detailed discussion of the stages leading to self-actualization. Meanwhile, Rhamawati's research (2024) also examines the self-actualization of the main character, but the object of study was different, so the result cannot be directly compared with this novel. As far as research has gone, no research has been found that specifically analyzes the novel *Days at the Morisaki Bookshop* with a focus on the process of self-actualization of the main character using Maslow's theory. Thus, this study offers novelty in the

form of a more focused analysis of the details of Takako's stages of self-actualization, while also expanding the theoretical discussion on the application of Maslow's hierarchy of needs in contemporary Japanese literature.

B. Problems of the Study

This study addresses the following research questions:

1. What actions does Takako take in fulfilling her needs through the book and the bookstore in *Days at the Morisaki Bookshop*, based on Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs?
2. How do books and bookstore influence Takako's actions, and how do they reflect her journey toward self-actualization in *Days at the Morisaki Bookshop*, according to Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs?

C. Significance of the Study

The researcher here wants to make readers understand issues related to human needs that always appear in real life and literary works. Theoretically, the findings are expected to make a significant contribution to literary studies by showing that Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory can be used as an analysis in understanding characters in literary works. By using this theory, researcher and readers can gain deeper insights into how books contribute to the fulfillment of the main character's needs based on Maslow's hierarchy of needs and how books contribute to the main character's journey towards the process of self-actualization. In addition, the researcher also has practical contributions for readers and society, with findings that highlight how books and bookstore can fulfill psychological and emotional needs, and individuals can better appreciate the role of literature.

Ultimately, this research confirms that exploring books and bookstore is a means for self-growth and development, as well as providing a new perspective on how literary works environment as a tool to understand oneself and the world around.

D. Scope and Limitations

This study focuses on analyzing the changes and efforts of the main character, Takako, who experiences development in fulfilling needs through books and the bookstore of the self-actualization process in the novel *Days at the Morisaki Bookshop* by Satoshi Yagisawa. The limitations of this study in its analysis are that it focuses only on the main character in the novel, as well as its relationships with Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory in classifying the influence of books and the bookstore at each stage, and the in-depth discussion of the main character's self-actualization. Future researchers can further explore the same literary works using different perspectives, such as psychological theories that may be applicable, to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the relationship between literature and psychology.

E. Definition of Key Terms

Some important terms in this study are explained by the researcher to avoid any misconceptions in understanding what is discussed in the study:

1. *Hierarchy of needs* is a psychological theory that explains that humans have needs that are arranged in levels, and the fulfillment of needs at the lower levels must usually be achieved first before moving on to the next level (Maslow, 1943).

2. *Self-actualization* refers to the realization of individual potential and the search for the experience or meaning of life (Maslow, 1943)

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

The theoretical frameworks that informed this investigation are detailed in this section. A literature review on psychology was conducted first by the researcher. In the second place, the researcher delves into the hierarchy of needs of Abraham Maslow's theory.

A. Psychological Approach in Literary Criticism

Psychology as a scientific discipline is a focused approach to understanding the human psyche. The field explores mental health issues from various perspectives, including the causes, symptoms, and contexts behind them (Setiawan, 2022). Psychology seeks to understand the mental processes that underlie human behavior, both conscious and unconscious, to manage and understand behavior and mental events (Moghaddam, 2004).

On the other hand, literature is the result of creative expression that focuses on the human experience. According to Potter (2023), literature is a product of art that depicts human life. In this context, “*psychological literature*” refers to studies that analyze character and themes using psychological approaches. Literary works often reflect the character’s conflicts, social issues, and psychological challenges, thus providing a deeper insight into human nature.

Literary criticism based on psychology, as Allan (2021) explains, analyzes literary works through the lens of the author's mental process and character. Thus, psychology and literature complement each other in understanding the creative

process and the character built by the author. Through this approach, character in literary works are not only a representation of the author's imagination but also reflect deep psychological complexity.

Psychological analysis of fictional characters is essential to understanding the dynamics of emotions and motivations underlying their actions. Poets who address psychological themes in their works demonstrate a deep understanding of the human mind and the challenges faced in everyday life (Potter et al., 2023). By focusing on the character, can explore their inner struggles, which are often closely related to mental health issues.

As a branch of study in psychology, especially the psychology of personality and the dynamics of fictional characters in depth. The psychological issues raised in the literature provide insight into human nature and the behaviors that arise in various situations. Psychoanalytic literary criticism, for example, offers a framework for understanding the complex psychological experiences depicted in literary works and how authors subtly portray the mental struggles of characters to enhance reader empathy (Minderop, 2010).

Thus, the relationship between psychology and literature enriches our understanding of literary works and provides deeper insights into the human condition and the psychological challenges faced in everyday life.

B. Abraham Maslow's Theory

Abraham Harold Maslow is a psychologist who is widely recognized for his contribution to the development of humanistic theory. He had a deep interest in

human behavior and personality, which later gave birth to what is known as the hierarchy of needs theory. Abraham Maslow put forward a theory of human needs widely known as Maslow's hierarchy of needs in the context of the social environment (Acquah et al., 2021). This theory indicates that humans have various levels of needs that must be met throughout their lives. According to Maslow, individuals strive to achieve their desires (Altymurat, 2021).

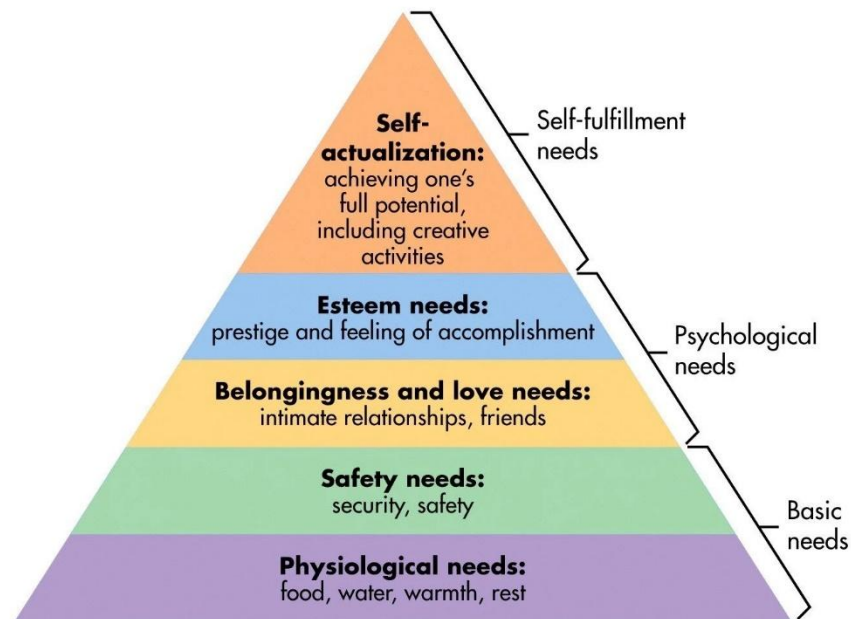
According to Maslow (1943), he is noted for his concept of a hierarchy of needs, which involves five levels: physiological, safety, love and belonging, esteem, and self-actualization. Physiological needs include basic survival requirements such as food, drink, shelter, and sleep. Once such needs are solved, people will seek security, whether it be physical, financial, or health-related. Humans then move on to social needs such as love, cooperation, and belonging within a group or interpersonal relationship. At the next level, esteem needs include achievement, acknowledgment, and self-confidence. At its highest point, self-actualization becomes the main focus: the desire to reach potential, self-development, and to realize life goals.

Maslow's theory is highly prominent in the field of psychology, particularly humanistic psychology, for gaining a better understanding of human motivation. This theory has also significantly impacted other sectors, including human resources management, education, and organizational development. In a management context, the theory is utilized to create a work environment that fosters employee motivation and satisfaction by fulfilling basic needs, ensuring security,

and providing opportunities for self-actualization (Awino & Apitz, 2024). In education, the concept aids in designing learning environments that address students' needs holistically, from a sense of security to encouragement for growth (Shi, 2021). Maslow's theory is also employed in marketing (Aghabi, 2024) to understand consumer needs and mental health (Shoib et al., 2022) to help individuals achieve emotional balance. With an approach that emphasizes human potential, Maslow's theory remains relevant and contributes significantly to understanding people in various contexts.

C. Abraham Maslow's Concept of the Hierarchy of Needs

The Hierarchy of Needs Theory was developed by Abraham Maslow in 1943. Maslow published his theory in an article entitled *A Theory of Human Motivation* in *Psychological Review*. This theory was developed in response to psychological approaches such as behaviorism, which emphasized behavioral and environmental influences (Zhao, 2024). Maslow argued that to understand human motivation, it is important to consider a person's inner needs and desires (McLeod, 2007). Maslow identified five levels of needs in his hierarchy, starting with physiological needs, followed by safety needs, belongingness and love needs, esteem needs, and finally self-actualization needs. Each need must be met sequentially, reaching lower needs and focusing on higher ones. This shows that the need for physical survival is the most basic and will affect human behavior. Here are Maslow's five levels of needs:



McLeod, S. (2024). Maslow's Hierarchy Of Needs. Simply Psychology.

<https://images.app.goo.gl/8tUu8abAqovfyUax9>

1. Physiological needs

These needs are the most basic and are essential for survival, including clothing, food, and shelter. Maslow argues that if these needs cannot be met, the human body cannot function optimally, and individuals will prioritize these needs over everything else (Maslow, 1943). For example, someone who does not have food or access to shelter will experience stress because it will be difficult to survive, which is a basic human need, so they cannot focus on other needs.

2. Safety needs

This need for security and protection includes physical, financial, health, and well-being security (Maslow, 1943). Individuals strive to create stability and protection from harm, which can manifest in various forms. For example, in today's

life, the existence of health insurance allows one to reduce anxiety about things that might happen in the future, such as accidents or serious illnesses.

3. Belongingness and love needs

This level encompasses emotional relationships, including friendships, romantic bonds, and family relationships. The need for love and connectedness is essential for emotional health, as it promotes a sense of acceptance (Maslow, 1943; Gyane, 2024). For example, building friendships with mutual support will help one not feel lonely.

4. Esteem needs

Esteem needs are divided into two categories: self-esteem and esteem received from others. These include feelings of accomplishment, recognition, and respect (Maslow, 1943). Individuals feel confident and valued when these needs are met, contributing to their self-worth. For example, when someone can get the best grades in college, they will get a cum laude degree. This is a form of recognition and appreciation from the outside.

5. Self-actualization needs

This stage is the peak of the need for self-actualization, which refers to the realization of individual potential and the search for the experience or meaning of life (Maslow, 1943). Maslow describes self-actualization as the desire to be or get everything that a person can achieve. For example, in pursuing a hobby, an artist

will try to produce beautiful and interesting works so that they can be enjoyed by others so and he will feel happy for the hard work he has done.

This theory helps understand human motivation by explaining how individuals try to fulfill their needs. Then, in its application in various fields, for example, in social development, the government can use Maslow's hierarchy of needs to design programs that focus on fulfilling people's basic needs, such as access to food, clean water, and education (Rudyanto et al., 2022). In art and literature, this theory becomes a powerful analytical tool for understanding the journey of characters or story themes, especially those that depict human struggles in meeting their needs amid life's challenges. With its application flexibility, Maslow's theory is relevant in individual contexts and provides a valuable framework for designing solutions to broader social and cultural challenges (Acquah et al., 2021).

D. Self-Actualization

Self-actualization is a concept that refers to the achievement of an individual's full potential and self-development. According to Maslow (1943), self-actualization is the pinnacle of the hierarchy of human needs, where individuals strive to meet their highest needs after basic and psychological needs are met. This process involves deep self-exploration and the search for meaning in life, which allows individuals to develop holistically (Parera, 2022). In this context, self-actualization is not simply the achievement of goals but also a journey toward better self-understanding.

Maslow characterized self-actualization by emphasizing the concept of integrated human wholeness, which Carl Rogers called a fully functioning individual; Jung described it as an individualized human being, and Fromm labeled it an autonomous human being (Setiawan, 2013). To further explain the concept of self-actualization, Maslow (1976) outlined the characteristics in his book, *The Farther Reaches of Human Nature*, by presenting “eight habitual characteristics.” The description of these characteristics is as follows:

- First, self-actualization means experiencing fully, vividly, selflessly, with full concentration and total absorption.

Due to their clear minds, individuals who achieve self-actualization can understand life experiences thoroughly and fully understand reality without being affected by the negative aspects around them (Maslow, 1976). With a healthy psychological state, they can focus on their activities and optimize their potential in creativity, skills, and interpersonal skills. This allows them to feel satisfaction and purpose in life, making their lives more meaningful and productive (Hendriani, 2017; Maslow, 1976).

- Second, life is a process of choices.

According to Maslow (1976), self-actualization can be defined as the process of making decisions and developing strategic solutions throughout life. Sometimes life presents a decision-making challenge that takes both brains and guts. Self-actualization leads individuals to make decisions that prioritize kindness. Individuals who strive for self-

actualization are receptive to learning from life (Hendriani, 2017; Maslow, 1976).

- Third, understand that there is a self that must be actualized.

The third characteristic is the effort to motivate oneself to find one's potential, which is then raised through positive activities as a form of self-actualization (Hendriani, 2017; Maslow, 1976).

- Fourth, if in doubt, be honest rather than not.

Maslow (1976) states, self-actualization in this context refers to personal and social responsibility. Individual responsibility represents honesty in facing the truth, especially in moments of doubt and fear. They can accept their mistakes freely. Social responsibility represents awareness of social life, communal welfare, mobility, and social justice (Hendriani, 2017; Maslow, 1976).

- Fifth, making a growth choice rather than a fear choice.

According to Maslow (1976), individuals with self-actualization are spontaneous in choosing to thrive rather than regress. This is characterized by a journey of achieving and working according to their potential (Hendriani, 2017; Maslow, 1976).

- Sixth, self-actualization is an ongoing process, not an end state.

According to Maslow (1976), the self-actualization process will constantly hone their potential under any circumstances. Individuals will enjoy a process full of challenges and sacrifices and try to always maximize every session in life for the better (Hendriani, 2017; Maslow, 1976).

- Seventh, peak experiences are transient moments of self-actualization.

According to Maslow (1976), peak experiences are psychological and spiritual. Inner experiences cannot be bought and obtained easily. Maslow pointed out that peak experience is a psychological situation that also occurs in religious experience, inner experience, which is the core of spiritual life (Hendriani, 2017; Maslow, 1976).

- Eighth, finding out who one is, what she is, what she likes, what she doesn't like, what is good for her and what is bad, where she is going, and what her mission is- opening oneself up to oneself.

According to Maslow (1976), the last characteristic is finding one's true self. It is characterized by awareness of one's strengths and weaknesses. Self-advantages always have potential that must be honed. Awareness of one's weaknesses starts with self-defense, then the courage to let it go, fight it, and slowly heal (Hendriani, 2017; Maslow, 1976).

Based on the description above, concluded that self-actualization refers to an individual's capacity to recognize their strengths and weaknesses. It requires the courage to release and heal from weaknesses, contingent upon personal effort. Ultimately, this journey allows people to accumulate experiences that contribute to their growth and development into fully realized human beings.

While self-actualization is desirable for many, this process is not always easy. Individuals often face various challenges, both internal and external, that can hinder their progress. Internal challenges may include stress management, self-

doubt, and emotional conflict. Meanwhile, external challenges may consist of expectations from others, social pressure, and resources or opportunities (Gary, 1990). Therefore, it is essential to understand that facing and overcoming these challenges is integral to self-actualization.

To achieve self-actualization, individuals need to engage in continuous learning and growth. This can be done through various means, such as self-reflection, education, and new experiences. Developing skills and knowledge relevant to life goals is also very important. In addition, individuals need to seek meaning and purpose, which is often a key driver in self-actualization (Schoofs, 2024). Individuals can approach their full potential by overcoming obstacles and continuously striving to learn.

Self-actualization significantly impacts everyday life. Individuals who reach this stage are happier and more satisfied with their lives. They can better deal with challenges and stress thanks to a better understanding of themselves and their life goal. In addition, self-actualization also contributes to improved mental and emotional health, which can improve overall quality of life (Hopper, 2024).

The concept of self-actualization is supported by various theories in psychology and literature that emphasize the importance of developing individual potential. Martin Seligman (1998), a pioneer of positive psychology, emphasizes individual strengths and potential, which is in line with self-actualization, where individuals are encouraged to develop their abilities to achieve higher happiness and life satisfaction. Carl Rogers (1951), a prominent figure in humanistic

psychology, posited that individuals have an innate drive to develop and achieve self-actualization, which can be facilitated through a supportive environment and unconditional acceptance. In addition, Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi (1990) developed the concept of “flow”, which is a state in which individuals are fully engaged and focused on their activity. This experience of flow is often linked to the achievement of self-actualization, as individuals feel fulfilled and inspired when engaging in activities that align with their interests and talents.

In a literary context, the theory of humanism also plays an important role, where it explores ideas of individualism and self-discovery, reflecting the theme of self-actualization through the search for meaning and personal growth. In addition, the psychoanalytic theories of Sigmund Freud and Carl Jung can be used to analyze characters and motifs in literary works, where self-discovery and healing from trauma or internal conflict become part of the journey toward self-actualization. Finally, feminist theory also makes a significant contribution, highlighting the journey of female characters towards self-discovery and independence. Overall, these various theories complement each other in explaining and supporting the concept of self-actualization, both in psychological and literary contexts.

In conclusion, self-actualization is an important process in personal development that contributes to an individual's happiness and ability to deal with life's challenges. By understanding the characteristics, challenges, and ways to achieve self-actualization, individuals can be better prepared to undertake this journey. This process is highly relevant to the human need to find meaning and

purpose in life, ultimately contributing to psychological and emotional well-being. Therefore, individuals need to strive towards self-actualization continuously as part of their life journey.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHOD

In this section, explain the methodology that was used in this study. This chapter includes the research design, data source, data collection, and data analysis, which are the sub-chapters that comprise this segment.

A. Research Design

This study uses a research method in the form of literary criticism. According to Searle (1970), literary criticism is a discipline that focuses on analyzing, studying, and interpreting literary works. Since this study examines the novel as the research subject, the researcher uses literary criticism as the result. This study uses a psychological approach, referring to Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory, to analyze the needs of the main character and her effort to fulfill the needs of the maximum stage, namely self-actualization, in *Days at the Morisaki Bookshop* by Satoshi Yagisawa.

B. Data Source

This research exclusively utilizes the primary data source from Satoshi Yagisawa's novel *Days at the Morisaki Bookshop*. The novel, which has 124 pages and two chapters, was published in hard copy in New York on July 4th, 2023, by Harper Perennial. The data come from direct quotations, which include words, dialogues, phrases, and sentences that appear in the novel related to the topic from the hard file version of *Days at the Morisaki Bookshop*.

C. Data Collection

Data from literary works were collected for this study by reading the novel to find out the needs that have been met through books and bookstore on the main character and the contribution of books and bookstore to the journey towards the main character's self-actualization of the ultimate needs in the novel *Days at the Morisaki Bookshop* (2023). The steps taken in the data collection process are as follows: First, the researcher conducted a careful reading process to understand the content of the novel. The second step was to annotate the data with fundamental information that highlighted the book's contribution to the fulfillment of the main character's needs based on Maslow's hierarchy of needs and the journey towards self-actualization in the main character. The last step is to record the results of the data annotation and organize the data that has been found previously.

D. Data Analysis

After completing data collection, the researcher proceeds to validate and strengthen the information that has been collected. This method requires verification of data relating to the research problem being studied. The data analysis method of this research uses a systematic analysis procedure. The first step is the data found, which describes the fulfillment of needs obtained by the main character through books and bookstore based on Maslow's hierarchy of needs, categorized into physiological, safety, love and belongingness, self-esteem, and self-actualization. The categorized data was identified as the highest stage reached in the second step. In the third step, the researcher explored the process of the highest

stage of Maslow's needs theory that the main character successfully reached through the book.

CHAPTER IV

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents the research findings and discussion based on Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs. It explores how the books and environment of Morisaki Bookstore contribute to the main character's need fulfillment and how they facilitate her journey towards self-actualization. The analysis starts from the most basic level of needs and continues to the highest level: actualization.

A. Overview of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs in the Novel

The main character of *Days at the Morisaki Bookshop* is Takako, a woman who experiences significant emotional and psychological development throughout the narrative. At the beginning of the novel, Takako is described as physically and emotionally disturbed. After being betrayed by her partner, who is also her co-worker, she resigns from her job and secludes herself from social life. He is described as passive, withdrawn, and unsure about her future.

Takako's early behavior is characterized by apathy, low self-esteem, and a sense of hopelessness. Her decision to take refuge in her uncle's old bookshop in the Jimbocho District of Tokyo was a decision she was reluctant to make. However, through her interactions with her surroundings, her uncle, the books, and the quiet community in her neighborhood, Takako gradually begins to recover. Her character develops from a person who is emotionally closed and unsure of her place in the world to a person who finds purpose, inner peace, and a new understanding of herself.

Her psychological journey, characterized by major emotional confrontations and moments of self-reflection, made her an ideal subject for analyzing Maslow's hierarchy of needs. Each stage of her development, from her search for basic comfort to her eventual embrace of self-worth and purpose, reflects Maslow's conceptual framework. As such, the narrative not only centers on Takako's healing but also illustrates how the fulfillment of basic human needs can lead a person toward self-actualization.

In *Days at the Morisaki Bookshop*, books serve as transformative tools in the main character's psychological and emotional development. Through the lens of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, from rebuilding a sense of security after a personal crisis to ultimately achieving moments of self-actualization, Takako's encounters with literature become stages of profound internal transformation that reflect her emotional and existential.

B. Fulfillment of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs by Takako

Takako's development in the novel can be effectively understood by tracing how she gradually fulfills each level of need as described in Maslow's five-level needs hierarchy. Each chapter in her emotional and psychological journey illustrates the progression from dependency and disorientation to self-awareness, emotional resilience, and personal empowerment.

1. Fulfilling of Physiological Needs

Maslow (1943) asserts that physiological needs are the most basic and must be met before individuals can focus on higher levels of the hierarchy. These include

essential elements such as food, shelter, and rest. For that, here are some data in the novel *Days at the Morisaki Bookshop*, including: the fulfillment of the first physiological need is shown in the following quote:

I lived at the Morisaki Bookshop. I spent that period of my life in the spare room on the second floor of the store, trying to bury myself in books. The cramped room barely got any light, and everything felt damp. It smelled constantly of musty old books. But I will always remember the days I spent there. Because that's where my real life began. And I know, without a doubt, that if not for those days, the rest of my life would have been bland, monotonous, and lonely. The Morisaki Bookshop is precious to me. It's a place I know I'll never forget. When I close my eyes, the memories still come back to me so vividly. (p.2)

In *Days at the Morisaki Bookshop*, the main character begins her journey after moving into a spare room above the bookstore. Although the living conditions are described as simple and not ideal. This space fulfills the basic human need for shelter, which is an essential element for survival. The main character was previously depressed after painful personal experiences. The fact that she was offered housing by her uncle, although small and modest, satisfied her need for physical security and rest. More importantly, her ability to live among books also marked the beginning of her emotional recovery.

Moreover, her statement about the books in the room “...*trying to bury myself in a book.*”, hints that reading serves as a way to protect oneself. The books were not only a mental escape but also a kind of inner nourishment, helping her to look back at her suffering and understand what she was going through. This is in line with the idea of Maslow (1943) that if basic physical needs are not met, then other activities will be disrupted. Once the need for shelter is met, even if it is simple, the main character can begin to focus on healing her emotions and thoughts.

The following data show that the main character initially faces emotional

disorientation after experiencing a personal crisis. However, she finds shelter in the space room of Morisaki's bookstore, which gradually satisfies her basic need for shelter:

I looked around the room again. It was strange—somehow her excitement about my room transformed the place from being dull into something wonderful. (p.32)

This situation is also directly related to the basic role of shelter as a basic human need. Initially, the main character perceives her room as dull, dark, and cramped, indicating that it does not meet her expectations for comfort. However, the enthusiastic perception of others helped her reframe the space, allowing her to mentally accept it as a place worthy of living. The development she feels is not in her physical structure, but in how she accepts it emotionally as a place to rest and survive.

This cognitive shift reflects how basic needs and emotional interpretations are interrelated. According to Maslow (1943), although physiological needs are Biological, a person's ability to understand and accept what she has can affect her psychological state. Once the main character accepts the room as a meaningful and livable space, this will be the basis on which the fulfillment of her physiological needs marks the beginning of the search for security, emotional connection, and self-actualization.

Although traditionally understood as a physical need, this need also includes a sense of being grounded in the world, which includes the human tendency to feel connected to place:

"Amazing," I said, rubbing my eyes. "Just wait till you see what's next," Momoko said with a grin
"It only took a few decades for the city to fill up with all those buildings," Momoko said. It made me think of the short story "Musashino" in one of Doppo Kunikida's

books. At the beginning of the twentieth century, when Doppo was alive, the area around Musashino was still so wild you could lose yourself inside it. These days it's just another neighborhood in Tokyo. (p. 88)

The passage reveals the involvement of the main character with the surrounding physical world by observing the buildings of the city, connecting them with the historical landscape. Reference literature here, in particular “*Musashino*” by Doppo Kunikida, is of great importance. The main character tries to connect the place and history, combining the environment with literary memory. This suggests that books not only provide emotional escape but also help her reconnect with the real world, thus satisfying her psychological comfort and environmental awareness.

According to Maslow’s theory (1943), in this case, the book acts as a bridge between the character’s inner world and outer reality, helping her to reconstruct a sense of continuity and identity of the environment. In addition, this reflective engagement with literature and the environment illustrates a deeper level of self-awareness and search for meaning, which is in line with Maslow’s concept of self-actualization. The ability to draw personal significance from external stimuli, such as books or cityscapes, exemplifies the kind of cognitive and emotional depth that characterizes an individual who develops towards the actualization of her full potential.

In the novel *Days at the Morisaki Bookshop*, the fulfillment of physiological needs is also explicitly depicted in the interaction between Takako and Momoko.

This can be seen in the quote:

Whenever I visited, Momoko was very happy to see me. And she always treated me to a home-cooked meal. (P.76)

In the context of Maslow’s theory, the home-cooked meals prepared by

Momoko at the bookstore are not just a form of attention, but also directly fulfill Takako's basic needs for nutrition and satiety, which are the main elements of physiological needs. By receiving regular nutritious meals in a safe and warm environment, her body gets the nourishment it needs to function optimally. This simple moment is important, then, because it marks part of the stage in Takako's process of fulfilling the basic needs that allow her to move on to process of fulfilling the basic needs that allow her to move on to the process of finding meaning and self-actualization.

2. Fulfilling Safety Needs

According to Maslow (1943), safety needs are the desire of individuals to feel secure, stable, and protected from both physical and emotional harm. Once basic needs are met, people will seek a place where feel emotionally secure and protected, allowing them to recover and plan for the future. For that, here are some data in the novel *Days at the Morisaki Bookshop*, including: the fulfillment of the first safety need is shown in the following quote:

Think of it as a little rest in the long journey of your life. This is your harbor. And your boat is just dropping anchor here for a little while. And after you're well rested, you can set sail again." "You're saying that now, but then you complain when I'm sleeping," I said spitefully. He laughed. "Human beings are full of contradictions." I was pouting without realizing it. Especially this guy, I thought. (p.27)

This quote is more than a simple conversation; it represents the emotional protection provided by the bookstore and her uncle. The metaphor of the harbor and the resting boat suggests that the main character has found a safe space to pause and recover from the turmoil in her life, especially after a breakup and job loss. This physical and emotional protection is essential in meeting her safety needs, allowing

her to avoid stress and regain stability. In the *Days in the Morisaki Bookshop*, the main character experiences this sense of security and tranquility during a conversation with her uncle. Her uncle's acceptance and humor, "*Human beings are full of contradiction,*" also help provide emotional security. Instead of encouraging her to be productive, he understands that she needs to rest, show emotional support. This gentle recognition acts as an emotional buffer, convincing her that she does not need to solve everything right away. Moreover, this sense of security is supported by the atmosphere of the Morisaki bookstore, filled with books. The books create a calm atmosphere that meets the needs of the main character.

Maslow's theory asserts that security needs include not only physical security, but also mental stability and emotional comfort. In the novel *Days at the Morisaki Bookshop*, reading becomes the main mechanism for the main character to fulfill aspects of emotional and psychological security. This becomes especially evident in the following passage:

So there in that dim room, with only the light of a little lamp near my pillow, I burrowed under my covers and began to read. My hope was that the book would be boring enough that I would fall right asleep. But a funny thing happened. An hour later, I was totally absorbed in it. Sure, there were some passages where the writing was difficult, but the subject of the book was human psychology, which is universal. (p.28)

This quote describes the moment of comfort and tranquility that the main character feels when alone, only in the company of the light of a small lamp and a book. In a calm and safe condition, she wrapped herself under a blanket and began to read. At first, she hoped that the book would be boring enough to fall asleep soon. However, the opposite happened; she was immersed in the story and became very

interested. The book she read dealt with human psychology, a theme that is universal and close to anyone's life.

This experience forms what can be called a mental sanctuary, a space within the mind that provides a sense of calm and emotional protection. While reading, Takako can temporarily escape from the sadness and chaos of her life. It goes into the world of well-organized and meaningful stories. This is following Maslow's theory of needs, especially at the level of safety needs. Maslow (1943) explained that a person can only grow and develop if they already feel safe, both physically and emotionally. In addition, the comfort and peace that Takako feels while reading is also the basis for meeting the next need in Maslow's hierarchy, namely the need for self-esteem. As Takako began to understand the content of the book and feel connected to the humanitarian themes in it, it helped her feel more confident and proud of herself. She began to realize that she was able to think, feel, and understand deep things. This becomes an important step towards the development of the higher self.

Thus, Morisaki's bookstore and reading activities are not only a place of escape for Takako but also a means to rebuild her identity, sense of security, and self-confidence. From here, she began to step into a higher stage of development, namely the process towards self-actualization.

Maslow's safety needs also encompass the search for emotional security, which includes building trusting interpersonal relationships that provide psychological comfort. This is evident in the protagonist's growing connection with her uncle:

We talked about the book for a while. It was a joy to feel connected to someone I'd felt I had so little in common with. It thrilled me even if it was just with someone like my uncle—no, it thrilled me even more because it was someone like him.
(p.29)

From that quotation, at first feeling alienated and emotionally closed, the main character begins to feel stability through conversation about books. Talking about literary works or books is one way to build trust and familiarity between two people who were previously separated. The intellectual and emotional relationships that are established, although they seem simple, satisfy the need for stable and meaningful human interaction, which is an essential part of the sense of security (Maslow, 1943).

Despite having little in common, the experience of sharing understanding shows that emotional closeness can grow from small things. Books become a link that makes her feel emotionally accepted and safe, reducing the feeling of loneliness. These experiences show that security does not always come from a perfect relationship, but it can come from recognition, common interest, and quiet friendship. Morisaki's bookstore provides a comfortable and emotionally stable space, which is essential for the main character before she can step into the stage of the need for a sense of belonging and self-worth.

Another important aspect of security in Maslow's theory is psychological stability, the feeling that our environment and our role in it feel safe, predictable, and meaningful. Morisaki bookstore provides this sense of security through its calm and warm atmosphere, especially through used books that connect people over time:

It's only in secondhand books that you can savor encounters like this, connections that transcend time. And that's how I learned to love the secondhand bookstore

that handled these books, our Morisaki Bookshop. I realized how precious a chance I'd been given, to be a part of that little place, where you can feel the quiet flow of time. (p.31)

This section shows that the bookstore becomes a place that provides emotional comfort. The main character feels calm because there is a continuity of security that is not only a matter of physical protection, but also a matter of feeling part of something fixed and meaningful. *"The quiet flow of time"* describes an atmosphere far from chaos, a place that allows for personal growth slowly and safely. Books are a safe container for the human mind and memory. These books bring the reader's feelings and thoughts with the author's previous, so that the main character feels connected to the broader human experience. Feeling part of a place that guards and gives her a sense of calm is important in meeting the need for security, according to Maslow (1943). The realization that being in this space is something worthwhile signals that she has moved from feeling unstable and alienated, as at the beginning of the story, towards a place where she feels protected, valued, and has a handle on life.

As explained in Maslow's theory (1943), once basic needs such as food and shelter are met, human beings will seek emotional security and meaning in life. In this case, the Morisaki bookshop serves as a port of place where the main character feels safe, accepted, and can take a break from the chaos of life. What appears strong in the following quote:

By the time I realized that, half my life was over. So I went back to my favorite harbor, and I decided to drop anchor. For me, this is a sacred place. It's where I feel most at ease." (p.43)

This quote shows that the main character has gone through a phase of life full of uncertainty. The phrase *"By the time I realized that, half my life was over"*

describes regret and reflection towards an unstable or emotionally unfulfilled past. This indicates a void or disruption in the level of safety needs that have not been met in the past.

Then, the decision to return to “*favorite harbor*” and “*drop anchor*” indicated the search for and achievement of a sense of security and stability. Harbor symbolically refers to a place safe from where one can rest from the dangers and stresses of life. The act of dropping the anchor illustrates the desire to stop wandering emotionally and begin to build a consistent sense of security.

The statements “*this is a sacred place*” and “*I feel most at ease*” reinforce the meaning that this place has a psychological meaning as a protective space. For the main character, this place is not just physical, but becomes a space that gives her the sense of control, inner calm, and order she needs. In these conditions, safety needs such as emotional stability, personal security, and environmental consistency begin to be met.

This condition is very important in Maslow’s theory (1943) because without the fulfillment of safety needs, it is difficult for the individual to move up to the next stage in the pyramid, which is the need for affection, appreciation, and self-actualization. By rediscovering her port, the main character recovers the emotional foundations that allowed her to begin to recover and develop. The quote above reflects the fulfillment of the need for a sense of security that is very important in the transitional phase of the main character’s life. The place mentioned is not just a physical space, but a symbol of the restoration of a sense of control, stability, and self-protection, which became the foundation for the next stage of development in

Maslow's hierarchy.

In the novel *Days at the Morisaki Bookshop*, reading classics becomes not only a passive activity but also a safe emotional space for the main character to explore feelings, heal wounds, and process life experiences. This is also reflected in the quote:

Matsugorō's painful, single-minded obsession hit home for me. After I finished the book, my heart fell silent. Tears ran down my cheeks and dropped onto the book, leaving little stains on the pages. Under the covers of my futon, as I drifted off to sleep, I found myself thinking that Wada had a pretty romantic side. In my dream that night, I was the woman who ran the café in the novel, and I was shaking Ukiyō by the shoulders, doing my best to persuade her to go out with Matsugorō. (p.82)

This quote describes a quiet, private moment when the main character reads a book under her futon blanket. In the silence, she cried, pondered, then fell asleep and dreamed. This moment does not take place in a public space, but rather in a very personal and safe space, which gives it psychological protection to express sadness and empathy in its entirety.

Crying from being moved by Matsugoro's story, and even being carried away by dreams, shows that the main character has reached a point where she feels safe enough to allow herself to be fragile and touched. This is a real form of emotional safety, a condition in which a person can experience and express deep emotions without fear or external threat. The phrase "*under the covers of my futon*" not only describes the physical position while reading, but also a symbol of warmth and psychological protection. The blanket here becomes a metaphor of the barriers between the uncertain outer world and the calm inner world. The blanket creates the conditions of a stable and closed environment, where the main character feels calm and safe to feel fully, even allowing her imagination to take over through

dreams. This sense of security is important because without psychological security, the expression of such emotions, crying, dreaming, immersed in fictional stories would not be possible freely. When a person does not feel safe, her body and mind will remain alert, and she will not allow herself to truly feel or release the repressed emotions.

The books she read became part of that safe place. Literature acts as a safe means of experiencing the emotions of others, resonating with the suffering of fictional characters, and projecting one's feelings indirectly. In Maslow's theory (1943), the sense of security comes not only from the physical environment, but also from media and activities that provide mental protection and emotional stability. In this case, reading becomes a deeply reflective activity, which indirectly satisfies the need for safety through a personal atmosphere, and is free from the distraction or threat of feeling, crying, and dreaming, a form of inner calm that becomes a pre-condition for stepping into higher needs such as love, esteem, and self-actualization.

3. Fulfilling Love and Belongingness

In Maslow's hierarchy(1943), once physiological and security needs are met, humans will seek the need for love and belonging, including warm relationships, accepting communities, as well as the experience of being emotionally connected to another person or a specific place. In *Days at the Morisaki Bookshop*, the fulfillment of this need begins as the main character slowly begins to form an emotional connection with the place and the people around her, including

the bookstore and her uncle, Satoru. The following quote marks the beginning of the growth of a sense of attachment:

I stared at the shop with its sign that read MORISAKI BOOKSHOP SPECIALIZING IN LITERATURE OF THE MODERN ERA and felt a little moved by the sight. (p.11)

The above quote reflects the initial moment of Takako's emotional connection with a place that would later become the center of change in her life. The diction “*a little moved*” indicates a restrained and cautious emotional response. It is not a form of deep emotion, but rather a soft and subtle emotional impression, reflecting Takako's psychological state of still being wounded, still in the process of recovery, and not yet ready to fully open up to new experiences or relationships. Instead of showing great euphoria, Takako is only slightly moved when she sees the bookstore. This indicates that there is a distance she has created between herself and the outside world, due to the emotional trauma she has just experienced in the form of relationship betrayal, a sense of directionlessness, and a work and personal identity crisis. This feeling is the first step of recovery, where she starts to feel something again, although she is still very cautious. In other words, it reflects the cracking of the emotional defense wall, but it has not completely collapsed. It is a form of trust that is slowly emerging, a sign that she may be ready to reconnect with places, people, and herself.

And more than just a bookstore, this place acts as a “symbolic home” for Takako. Not only did she find a physical place to live, but also an inner space that helped her feel safe, accepted, and reconnected with the values of life that she had lost. The bookstore holds family memories, knowledge from books, and genuine human relationships, all of which contribute to creating a stable and reassuring

environment. In Maslow's (1943) theoretical framework, this condition is closely related to the need for belongingness. After meeting physiological and security needs, humans need social connectedness, such as feelings of belonging, acceptance, and love. Through her interactions with Uncle Satoru and the shop's customers, as well as through the touching experience of reading, Takako slowly fulfills these social needs. The sense of belonging to a place and community that accepts her for who she is becomes an important foundation before she moves on to the need for self-esteem and self-actualization. As such, it becomes the foundation of rebuilding herself, processing her emotions, and making a bridge between her inner world and the outer world in the process towards personal growth and healing.

The need for belonging and love does not always come in the form of a deep or romantic relationship, sometimes it starts with small, warm interactions, like Takako's first encounter with a customer at a bookstore:

Around one, a middle-aged man turned up. He was short and stout and spectacularly bald. As soon as he saw me sitting behind the counter, he did a double-take. "What? Where's Satoru—more importantly, who are you? Did they hire a girl to work part-time? But this place can't afford to hire anyone, can it?" He hit me with one question after another. How could I describe him? He was the kind of middle-aged man who didn't hold anything back. "Um, my uncle will be coming in around two. I'm his niece, Takako. I'm sort of part-time, I suppose. I'm working for room and board. As for the shop's financial situation, I'm afraid I'm not familiar with the details." As I ran through my replies, the man studied me carefully with a look of deep interest. "Oh wow," he said. "How did I not know that all this time Satoru had a cute, young niece." I flashed a sweet smile. It was lucky for me he hadn't seen my shameful appearance this morning. Maybe he was a sweet old guy after all. He seemed pleasant enough, and what's more, he had good taste. (p.15)

From the quote above, the interaction between Takako and the middle-aged male customer in the store exposes an important moment in the process of restoring Takako's previously fragile social identity. The simple conversation that took place

in the bookstore opens up space for Takako to feel seen and recognized by others, even by a stranger who is used to coming to the store. The spontaneous response of customers who show interest and openness to Takako's presence is an important form of social recognition, especially for someone who has previously experienced emotional alienation. After being abandoned by her lover and losing direction in life, Takako goes through her days feeling worthless and out of place. However, through the warm and curious interaction of the store's customers, she began to feel that she again had a position in a community, no matter how small it was.

Within the framework of Maslow's theory of needs (1943), this moment is closely related to the stage of the need for love and belonging. The human being, once she feels physically and emotionally secure enough, will seek relationships that give her a sense of attachment and acceptance by her social environment. Takako's friendly customer response and involvement in the bookstore's routine slowly build a new social network that gives her emotional support. In a light and non-threatening way, this experience helps Takako develop a sense of trust towards others and towards her ability to connect. Her willingness to smile, even if she was previously embarrassed by her appearance, indicates that she is beginning to open up and feel more comfortable in social situations. Thus, this interaction is not just an ordinary form of communication, but rather the starting point of satisfying the need for connectedness, which gradually strengthens Takako's social and emotional identity on the way to self-recovery.

In addition to warm conversations, intimacy in social relationships is also reflected in the form of jokes and small talk attentions, as in the following quote:

Even our regular customer Sabu seemed to know all about my life. He came in one day and said, "Oh, if it isn't the sleep monster, Takako." "Who told you that?" I said, indignantly. But of course, it could only have been my uncle, the person I was really angry with. (p.19)

In the quote from it appears that Takako is beginning to become part of a familiar social dynamic in the bookstore environment. The nickname "sleep monster" used by Sabu, a regular customer, is a mild form of ridicule that, in the context of a culture of informal interaction, actually indicates social acceptance. Takako responds to the taunts with an "indignantly" tone, a reaction that seems to be not just out of shame, but also because she still carries the sensitivity of a past filled with rejection, loss, and disrespect. This anger reflects that she has not fully recovered from the emotional wound, and that she is still vulnerable to humiliation, although objectively the mockery is not offensive.

Nevertheless, this interaction still marks that Takako has entered a more intimate and personal circle of communication. This kind of Humor serves as a bridge of familiarity, signifying that she has been indirectly accepted as part of the small community at Morisaki Bookshop. In the context of Maslow's theory(1943), this experience is still rooted in the fulfillment of the need for esteem needs. Being accepted into everyday conversation and being the subject of lighthearted stories means that Takako is acknowledged for her existence, not just as 'Satoru's niece', but as an individual with distinctive traits that are remembered and talked about. Although simple, this form of attention has had a huge impact on rebuilding her self-esteem, which has been in decline. Through humor, intimate teasing, and involvement in social routines, Takako begins to feel that she is valuable in the eyes of others, which becomes an important foundation for her healing process and

emotional growth.

A sense of emotional connection does not always arise from direct relationships with people around. In the following excerpt, Takako experiences a deep feeling of attachment to someone she does not even know:

At some point in the past, someone reading this book had felt moved to take a pen and draw a line under these words. It made me happy to think that because I had been moved by that same passage too, I was now connected to that stranger: (p.30)

As Takako reads a used book and discovers there is a passage underlined by a previous reader, she senses something unusual. She feels emotionally connected to someone she does not know, just because of that bottom line. Although simple, this moment gives the impression that she is not alone in her thoughts. Other people do not know who has read the same sentence and may feel the same way about it. This makes Takako feel closer to her fellow human beings, although not through direct conversation.

According to Abraham Maslow (1943), in his theory of the hierarchy of human needs usually these needs are met through direct relationships with other people, such as family, friends, or partners. However, in Takako's case, this need begins to be fulfilled slowly in an unusual way, through books. When she felt understood by someone who had read the book before, she began to feel emotional warmth and connectedness. This is especially important for Takako, who has previously experienced difficult times, such as breakups and a sense of loss of direction in life. She feels alone and insignificant, so small experiences like this become very meaningful.

The feeling of being loved and having a place to return is an essential part of the need for belonging, according to Maslow (1943). In the following excerpt,

the relationship between Takako and her uncle exposes the fulfillment of this need touchingly:

The joy of realizing that someone loved me that much made my heart want to burst. I tried to make a joke to hold back the tears welling up in my eyes. "Uncle," I said, "that's not exactly dialogue you should deliver while you're eating shredded squid." My uncle laughed out loud. "So did you end up finding the place you belonged?" "Well, I guess you might say that. But it took me many years to get there." My uncle nodded quietly. "This is it. Our little, rundown Morisaki Bookshop. I had so many aspirations. I flew all over the world only to end up back at the place I'd known every bit of since I was a child. (p.42)

In this quote, Takako, for the first time, truly feels that she is loved and accepted for who she is. When her uncle asked, "*So did you end up finding the place you belonged?*" and Takako replied that the journey took many years, it shows how important the process she has gone through is to be able to feel the meaning of 'home' emotionally. The answer is simple, but full of meaning. Not only did she find a physical place, Morisaki's bookstore, but more than that, she found a place where she was accepted, understood, and loved, especially by her uncle.

Aligned with Maslow's view (1943) in this context, Morisaki's bookstore becomes a symbol of both a place that provides a sense of emotional and physical security, as well as a space where Takako begins to build meaningful social relationships. Previously, she lived in isolation and with emotional wounds after being betrayed by someone she loved. But in this bookstore, with the help of her uncle and the small community around her, she begins to restore her trust in others and herself. Takako's uncle's statement that she has flown worldwide only to return to a place she has known since childhood shows that a sense of belonging is not always found in great achievements or long journeys. Precisely, a simple, even old and shabby place like this bookshop can be the most meaningful space if there is a

sincere relationship in it. Takako cried not only because she was moved, but because, for the first time, she truly felt unconditionally loved.

This scene confirms that the fulfillment of the need for a sense of security and belonging does not depend on a luxurious environment or high social status, but on the warmth of relationships between people. The Morisaki Bookshop becomes an emotional home for Takako, a place where she no longer feels alone, and a place where she can be herself without fear of being judged. The recognition of the uncles and their increasingly close relationship shows that human needs to be loved, accepted, and feel emotionally secure can be fulfilled in a small but meaningful space.

In addition to self-esteem, sessions that have a relationship with the bookshop can also be seen from the following quote:

The Morisaki Bookshop stands alone at the corner of a street crowded with used bookstores. It's tiny and old and really nothing much to look at. There aren't many customers. And because it has a limited selection, people who aren't interested in its specialty never give it a second glance. But there are people who love this store. And as long as they're devoted to it, then that's enough. That's what my uncle Satoru, the shop's owner, always says with a smile. And I agree. Because I love the bookshop and its owner. (p.115)

In this quote, Morisaki Bookshop is described as small, old, and seemingly uninteresting to most people. However, in its simplicity and limitations, the bookshop holds immense meaning for Takako and her uncle. This highlights the emotional bond that the characters have with the bookshop, and more importantly, with Satoru, the shopkeeper. This emotional attachment to the bookshop serves as a substitute or fulfillment of the character's need for belonging and love. This suggests that the character's emotional health is nurtured by this small community within the store, even though it may seem insignificant to the outside world. The

character's devotion to the bookstore reflects the idea that love and belonging are not necessarily associated with large social circles or materialistic achievements, but with deep and meaningful connections to people and places that make them feel welcome and valued.

The bookshop becomes a haven where the characters feel connected, valued, and part of something meaningful, satisfying their need for emotional attachment, which is a central element in their psychological development. Takako feels that she is valuable and accepted for who she is. She is not judged by her past, is not expected to be perfect, and does not feel alone. All of this strengthens her psychological state and helps her build her self-esteem.

4. Fulfilling Self-Esteem

In particular, Maslow (1943) described the category of self-esteem as the need for reward as a desire for achievement, recognition, and the development of a sense of competence and confidence. It can be seen from the following quote:

From that moment on, I read relentlessly, one book after another. It was as if a love of reading had been sleeping somewhere deep inside me all this time, and then it suddenly sprang to life. (Page 30)

In this quote, Takako describes a very powerful moment of personal awakening. Having previously experienced an emotional slump and loss of direction in life, rediscovering her interest in reading became an important turning point in the process of rebuilding her self-esteem. According to Abraham Maslow's theory (1943), the need for self-esteem is at the fourth level in the hierarchy of human needs. These needs include two aspects: (1) self-confidence and personal competence, and (2) appreciation from others. When a person begins to feel that

she is capable, productive, and has value, then the need for self-esteem begins to be satisfied. This is what Takako experienced in this quote.

Through constant reading, Takako begins to realize that she has an intellectual and emotional capacity that she did not previously recognize. The sense of passion and drive from within her to read one book after another became proof that she was no longer passive towards her life. She began to actively take control and determine the direction of an achievement that is very important in building self-confidence. Every time she finishes one book, she experiences a small moment of success, and each success adds to her sense of competence. Takako begins to feel capable and useful, and this fosters pride in herself. In other words, reading becomes a means to prove to oneself that it can develop and have value, even after a traumatic experience. In addition, her love for books not only builds self-confidence but also gives her life a new meaning. She feels that she can create meaningful relationships, even if initially only through texts and inner experiences. It also reflects a form of appreciation for herself that she deserves to be loved and appreciated, not only by others, but also by herself.

Thus, this quote shows that a simple activity such as reading can contribute greatly to the fulfillment of one's self-esteem needs. This became a strong foundation for Takako to move to the next stage in Maslow's hierarchy, self-actualization, where she could explore her full potential.

On other evidence as reinforcement in the stages of self-esteem needs of the main character in the novel, namely:

As a result, I became pretty knowledgeable about the writers we carried. Before I knew it, I had become close with our regulars, too. (p.31)

The quote above describes the fulfillment of the need for self-esteem in Maslow's hierarchy, specifically aspects of recognition from others and self-confidence. In Maslow's framework (1943), the need for self-esteem involves one's self-esteem and the self-esteem received from others. The character's growing knowledge of the writers in the bookstore contributes to their sense of competence and achievement. By being knowledgeable, the character demonstrates mastery and expertise in a particular subject that inherently increases self-esteem. The act of learning and acquiring proficiency brings a sense of pride and confidence, which is very important for one's personal development.

In addition, the character's ability to establish relationships with regular customers indicates another aspect of the need for appreciation: recognition and respect received from others. As the main character becomes close to regular customers, they begin to receive social recognition and appreciation from those around. This recognition from others reinforces a sense of value and self-worth, which increases self-esteem. The growing knowledge and social ties also indicate the character's evolving role and identity within the bookstore community. This development contributes to the character feeling validated and valued, not only by herself but also by others. The resulting relationship with regular customers further strengthens the main character's sense of belonging, competence, and self-esteem, elements of the reward need. Ultimately, this part of the narrative highlights how books and interactions in bookstores contribute to meeting the main character self

self-esteem needs, supporting the emotional growth and progress towards self-actualization.

Another important aspect of Maslow's self-esteem category is the role of external validation, the need to be respected and recognized by others as a competent individual. This aspect is reflected through the character's interactions with regular customers in the bookshop in the following excerpt:

"All of a sudden, I felt as if my twisted heart was being filled with warm light. It was still blurry, but I could feel a sense of purpose growing within me. That's when I made my decision. It was time to stop shutting myself up in a cage. It was time to get moving, to look around, and learn what I could from it all. Time to go in search of a place where I belonged, a place where I could say with confidence that I felt right. All the trips I went on, all the books I read, were the consequences of that decision. In other words, Takako, meeting you led me to a kind of epiphany." "An epiphany . . . That's amazing."(p.42)

This quote shows a moment of inner enlightenment and a turning point in the life of the main character. Takako felt a profound emotional shift from despair and isolation to a new zest for life. The phrase "*my twisted heart was being filled with warm light*" symbolically illustrates that the inner wounds or emotional turmoil she previously felt began to be healed by a feeling of warmth, hope, and direction.

According to Abraham Maslow (1943) in his hierarchy of needs, at this level, a person needs the belief that she is capable and valuable, not only from the recognition of others, but also from the recognition of herself. At the quote, the character experiences an awakening of self-awareness: "*It was time to stop shutting myself up in a cage.*". This is not just a literal phrase, but reflects the decision to get out of the limitations that she created, out of fear, doubt, and isolation. The decision to start moving, looking around, and looking for a place where she feels

fit marks a great development in her self-esteem. She feels brave and confident enough to take action in her life, something that can only be done when her self-esteem needs begin to be met.

The process of reading books and traveling is described as a form of self-exploration and a means to find strength and value in oneself. Every book read, every place visited, is a small step to strengthen self-confidence, recognize, recognize personal potential, and ultimately cultivate an appreciation of herself. When her uncle states that his encounter with Takako brings “*epiphany*” or enlightenment, it shows that emotional connections and positive experiences can spark a sense of confidence that was not there before.

This is in line with Maslow (1943), who emphasized that the need for self-esteem comes not only from achievement or social recognition, but also from understanding that one has direction, meaning, and the ability to make good decisions in life. The main character feels that she is no longer controlled by uncertainty or a sense of worthlessness, but is now able to confidently determine her own self-esteem needs: the main character experiences personal growth, has a clear direction in life, feels empowered, and believes that she deserves a place that makes her feel welcome. All that becomes an important foundation for moving to the highest stage in Maslow’s hierarchy (1943), namely self-actualization, when a person not only understands who she is, but also dares to become the best version of herself.

5. Achieving Self-Actualization

The main character's journey towards self-actualization is illustrated through the growing awareness of inner potential, which is reflected in her growing emotional and attitudinal changes. This awareness shows that the main character begins to understand who character are and desire to become the best version of themselves. This process is illustrated in the following quote:

Day by day, the leaves of the trees along the streets turned to gold. It delighted me to see how well the changing colors matched the slow transformation happening inside me. (p.31)

This quote beautifully exemplifies the concept of self-actualization in Maslow's hierarchy of needs. Self-actualization, according to Maslow (1943), is the realization of one's full potential and the pursuit of personal growth, purpose, and meaning in life. This quote reflects the inner transformation of the main characters and their ever-evolving sense of self. The comparison between the change in leaf color and the internal growth of the character indicates a deep personal development that is in tune with self-actualization. Character recognizes and appreciates this change, which is a key aspect of the self-actualization process, fully realizing one's growth and potential.

Gold leaf imagery symbolizes beauty, change, and the passage of time, important aspects in self-actualization, where individuals embrace personal growth and the disclosure of their true selves. The character's joy in witnessing this development not only indicates an awareness of her growth, but also signals that they are at a point where can appreciate the process of becoming the best version

of themselves. Maslow (1943) also noted that self-actualization involves the actualization of one's potential not only in intellectual or emotional activities, but also in living life to the fullest, with a clear focus and total absorption. The character's awareness of leaf changes as a reflection of changes within themselves shows that they live in harmony with their environment and are increasingly in tune with their inner desires and needs.

In short, this quote highlights the character's journey towards self-actualization, showing how their personal growth is not only visible but also meaningful, as aligning internal changes with the outside world. The changing leaves represent the natural and gradual disclosure of the character's potential, which is a core component of self-actualization.

The main character's path to self-actualization is further illustrated as they confront their dependence on others and come to realize the importance of personal growth and independence:

"Uncle."

"Yes?"

"I love this shop. I really do."

I'd meant to say something more clever, but that was all that came out of my mouth. It was true, though, and I felt it sincerely.

"Thank you. This shop might not be indispensable for most people, but if it matters that much to even just one other person, then I feel I can keep it going for decades. It's like the line from Naoe Kinoshita in Confessions of a Husband, 'My boat travels lightly, drifting aimlessly at the mercy of the current.' That's how I want to live my life with this shop," my uncle said, and then he smiled without saying any more.

From that night, I started to think more seriously about my own life. I'd found a warm, calm place to stay here, but I couldn't remain dependent on others forever. If I did, I would never grow up. My heart would always be weak. I was convinced that if I didn't leave, I would never be able to start over. (p.44)

The quote clearly describes the process of self-actualization, that is, the highest stage in Maslow's hierarchy of needs (1943), during which the individual

seeks to realize her full potential. In the dialogue between Takako and her uncle, there is an honest and sincere confession of love for the bookstore, a place that has always been a safe space and a source of emotional comfort for the main character.

However, this moment of reflection was precisely an important turning point. After hearing her uncle's life philosophy of choosing to live lightly and go with the flow, the main character realizes that although the bookstore is a warm and soothing place, she cannot forever depend on others. This awareness shows significant psychological growth, in which she begins to recognize that prolonged dependence can hinder her independence and development.

The decision not to stay too long and start over marks a big step towards self-actualization. It shows that the main character not only wants to survive in comfort, but also wants to take responsibility for her own life and go through a process of growth through personal experiences and new challenges. In the context of Maslow's theory (1943), it reflects an awareness of the untapped potential of the self, as well as the drive to become the best version of oneself through change and the courage to move forward.

Thus, this quote shows that meeting people who give meaning to life, such as the uncle who can be a trigger for a person to evaluate and strengthen the direction of her life. This is an important step in the process of self-actualization: awareness, courage to be independent, and the decision to grow beyond the comfort zone.

The character's journey toward self-actualization is reinforced by their growing understanding that personal experience and emotional connection are more important than intellectual knowledge. This can be seen from the following quote:

"I don't think it really matters whether you know a lot about books or not. That said, I don't know that much myself. But I think what matters far more with a book is how it affects you." "You think so? My uncle always says something like that."
(Page 73)

This will provide context for the quote and tie it into the concept of self-actualization. The quote highlights a key aspect of self-actualization: the importance of personal experience and emotional growth. The character's realization that how a book affects you means more than knowing much about it suggests a shift toward prioritizing personal insight and emotional fulfillment over external knowledge or expectations. It reflects a deeper level of self-awareness and personal growth, as self-actualization involves embracing one's unique experience and learning from it, rather than simply acquiring intellectual knowledge. The uncle's perspective also plays an important role in reinforcing this belief, showing that the character is influenced by others who prioritize emotional depth and personal satisfaction, which is essential for self-actualization.

The character's realization of her self-worth and growth is a pivotal moment in her journey toward self-actualization, highlighting the transformative power of their experiences in the bookstore. The following excerpt reflects a profound moment in the main character's self-actualization process, in which they acknowledge how her time at the bookshop has shaped their personal growth and sense of identity:

“If I’d never gone to the shop, I’d still be living my life in a daze. I met so many people there, and I learned so many things, and, of course, there were all of the books I discovered. I feel like I finally learned to see something a tiny bit valuable within myself. That’s why I know that I’ll never forget the days I spent at the bookshop.” Although this was the first time I’d ever really spoken to him, the words came pouring out of my mouth with such force I couldn’t help myself. (Page 74)

The statement *“I feel like I finally learned to see something a tiny bit valuable within myself”* is a clear expression of the main character discovering their self-esteem and personal worth, which is a key aspect of self-actualization. This shows that through the experiences and interactions in the bookstore, the characters have understood and appreciated themselves more fully. The fact that these words come out very strongly indicates a deep emotional awareness, which further emphasizes the inner transformation of the character. This enlightenment signifies the culmination of personal growth, where the character no longer feels loath or absentminded but has developed a clearer understanding of who they are and what they value important step in achieving self-actualization.

C. The Journey toward Self-Actualization

Self-actualization, the highest stage in Maslow’s hierarchy (1943), involves realizing one’s full potential, pursuing personal growth, and finding meaning and authenticity in life. In *Days at the Morisaki Bookshop*, Takako undergoes an emotional and psychological journey that gradually leads her toward self-actualization. This journey is reflected through key moments in the narrative that align with the core characteristics of self-actualized individuals. The following subchapters examine how Takako demonstrates acceptance, emotional honesty, and a sense of purpose, three essential indicators of self-actualization.

1. Acceptance of Reality

Maslow (1943) explains that self-actualized individuals can accept reality as it is without denial, distortion, or avoidance. In Takako's case, she initially avoids emotional pain by isolating herself and remaining in a passive state. However, the turning point comes when her uncle urges her to face her life directly:

"Don't run away from it, Takako," my uncle said, turning back to me with a terrible seriousness. "I'm with you. Don't run away." My uncle looked at me fiercely. I could see the intensity in his eyes. For a few seconds, we just stared at each other. He was right. I couldn't run away. If I did, nothing would change. Wasn't that obvious? I bit down hard on my tongue. "Okay, I get it. Let's go, Uncle." (p.48)

In this scene, Takako confronts the fact that running away from her problem will not help her heal or grow. Her agreement to go forward signifies a crucial moment of acceptance, which is the first step toward taking control of her own life. She begins to recognize that change only happens through conscious effort and the willingness to face uncomfortable truths. This readiness to accept reality reflects growing emotional maturity and a significant step toward self-actualization.

2. Emotional Honesty and Authenticity

Another key characteristic of self-actualized individuals, according to Maslow (1943), is their ability to express themselves honestly and authentically. Takako's emotional confrontation with her former lover marks a breakthrough in her ability to communicate her pain and assert her identity:

"I came because I want you to apologize! You might have just been playing around, but it wasn't like that for me. I really loved you. I am a person. I have feelings. You might look at me and see just a woman you can take advantage of, but I think about things, I breathe, I cry. Do you know how much you hurt me? I . . . I . . . " (p.50)

Here, Takako no longer hides her emotions or remains silent. Instead, she expresses her vulnerability and demands acknowledgment. Her ability to speak truthfully, even when it is difficult, shows increased self-awareness and emotional courage. Rather than suppressing her emotions, she allows herself to feel them fully and name them openly.

This moment is followed by a sense of relief and release, which she recognizes:

“It was enough. Really. I feel better, maybe better than I’ve felt in my whole life up till now. It’s amazing. This might be the first time I’ve ever raised my voice and told another person what I really felt,” I said, and then burst out laughing at my uncle with my face covered in tears and snot. (p.51)

This scene represents one of the most authentic emotional expressions in the novel. Takako laughs and cries simultaneously, embracing the rawness of her emotions without shame. Her laughter is not merely a reaction but a signal of emotional liberation. This blend of tears and joy reflects a key moment in her psychological growth, where she stops pretending and begins living more truthfully, an essential trait of the self-actualized self.

3. Sense of Purpose and Growth

As Takako continues to confront her past and express her feelings honestly, she begins to develop a deeper sense of purpose and direction. One of the most transformative realizations occurs when she reflects on her time at the bookshop and the value she has found within herself:

I feel like I finally learned to see something a tiny bit valuable within myself. That’s why I know that I’ll never forget the days I spent at the bookshop.” (p.74)

This quote highlights how the combination of emotional experiences, intellectual stimulation through books, and connection with people has helped Takako find a new sense of self-worth. The recognition of something “valuable” within herself signifies a breakthrough in self-esteem, which is closely tied to the journey toward self-actualization.

Takako also began to see books as more than objects of knowledge, but as sources of reflection, identity, and transformation:

From that moment on, I read relentlessly, one book after another. It was as if a love of reading had been sleeping somewhere deep inside me all this time, and then it suddenly sprang to life. (Page 30)

This passage captures how reading becomes an act of self-discovery. Through literature, Takako connects to broader human experiences and herself. Reading allows her to grow intellectually and emotionally, helping her to process past wounds while moving forward with newfound insight and purpose. This deep engagement with meaning and learning is a hallmark of Maslow’s vision of the self-actualized individual.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

In this chapter, the researcher presents the conclusions of this study and provides suggestions for further research. The conclusion is drawn from the analysis of the main character's psychological and emotional journey towards self-actualization through books and a bookstore as reflected in the novel *Days at the Morisaki Bookshop* by Satoshi Yagisawa. This process is examined through Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (1943) framework, which shows how each level of need contributes to the protagonist's personal development. To conclude, suggestions will be given to future researchers who are interested in researching the same issues.

A. Conclusions

This study found that the novel *Days at the Morisaki Bookshop* lies in the personal development of the main character, Takako, who initially struggles with psychological instability after being betrayed by her partner and losing her job. Her journey reflects the internal conflicts of the human being in search of meaning, emotional security, and purpose in life. This emotional trajectory is in line with Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs (1943), which became the main framework of the study.

The first research question in this study focuses on how books and bookstore contribute to meeting the psychological needs of the main character. These needs include physiological comfort, emotional security, love and belonging, self-esteem, and ultimately, self-actualization. In the novel, Takako begins by meeting her

physiological and safety needs while she lives in her uncle's bookshop, a space that offers his food, shelter, rest, and security that support her emotional recovery. As Takako settles into the bookshop, she begins to build meaningful relationships with her uncle and form new relationships with those around her. This marks the beginning of the fulfillment of her need for love and belonging. Her involvement in everyday life, small talk with regular customers, and support for the bookstore environment helped her to feel accepted and emotionally connected. Gradually, Takako also met her self-esteem needs. Through reading, self-reflection, and honest expression of emotions, she develops self-confidence and begins to recognize her worth. Her confrontation with her former lover and her ability to honestly express her feelings marked a turning point in her personal development. This emotional breakthrough signals her transition from passivity to active involvement.

The second research question addresses the process of self-actualization as experienced by Takako. This phase is characterized by the growth of her goals, emotional maturity, and independence. Books and bookstore play an important role in her journey, not only as a source of knowledge but also as a tool of introspection and healing. Literature helps Takako to better understand herself and the world, which ultimately leads her to a more authentic and purposeful life. She no longer seeks validation from others but begins to live based on her values and self-awareness. In the end, Takako's psychological journey describes the stages of Maslow's hierarchy (1943) in a clear and structured development. The novel not only depicts the emotional struggles of an individual but also shows how emotional

recovery and self-actualization can be achieved through meaningful spaces, human relationships, and the power of literature.

B. Suggestions

The analysis of *Days at the Morisaki Bookshop* opens up various opportunities for further research and reflection. Although this study focused on the main character's psychological development towards self-actualization through Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (1943), future research could explore other dimensions that are equally rich and meaningful. For example, researchers could examine how literature serves as a medium for emotional survival in urban solitude or how reading culture can be a silent resistance to the disconnection, alienation, and emotional exhaustion that occur in the modern era. The novel also provides a unique lens to explore the role of space, specifically the bookshop, as more than just a place, but also a place for introspection, healing, and reconnection with oneself. This could lead to further interdisciplinary research involving psychology, urban studies, or even theories of architecture and space, focusing on how certain environments can support emotional recovery and personal development. Another valuable direction would be to compare Takako's journey with other literary characters who transform books or literature. A cross-novel or cross-cultural analysis would highlight universal aspects of self-actualization and provide insight into how literature reflects human needs in different societal contexts.

This study centered on an individual's emotional journey, but future research could expand the scope to explore collective psychological themes such as generational disconnection, family dynamics, or the social role of books in

community life. As such, *Days at the Morisaki Bookshop* offers not only a compelling personal story but also a literary foundation for broader human inquiry. It is hoped that this research will be a starting point for further exploration of literature as a mirror of human psychology and a bridge to understanding personal and collective well-being.

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CURRICULUM VITAE



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