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Abstract

Self-actualization is the aspiration of an individual to reach their full potential and make use of their abilities, talents, and capacities. However, this is not as simple a process as it may sound. The Hierarchy of Needs developed by Abraham Maslow identifies numerous levels in the process of self-actualization. Atiq Rahimi's *The Patience Stone* (2008) represents the anxiety of the female protagonist in achieving self-actualization, in war-torn Afghanistan. The purpose of this research is to trace and unfold the process of self-actualization in the psychoanalytically complex female persona of "the woman". In order to achieve this goal, the study subscribes to Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs and certain postulates of Human Motivation theory. Moreover, the study applied a qualitative approach, blended with content analysis as a methodological tools for the analysis of the text.

**Keywords:** Patience Stone, Atiq Rahimi, Abraham Maslow, Self-Actualization

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### Title

## Self-actualization in the Character of Woman: A Psychoanalytic Study of the Patience Stone

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### Abstract

*Self-actualization is the aspiration of an individual to reach their full potential and make use of their abilities, talents, and capacities. However, this is not as simple a process as it may sound. The Hierarchy of Needs developed by Abraham Maslow identifies numerous levels in the process of self-actualization. Atiq Rahimi's The Patience Stone (2008) represents the anxiety of the female protagonist in achieving self-actualization, in war-torn Afghanistan. The purpose of this research is to trace and unfold the process of self-actualization in the psychoanalytically complex female persona of "the woman". In order to achieve this goal, the study subscribes to Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs and certain postulates of Human Motivation theory. Moreover, the study applied a qualitative approach, blended with content analysis as a methodological tools for the analysis of the text.*

**Keywords:** [Patience Stone](#), [Atiq Rahimi](#), [Abraham Maslow](#), [Self-Actualization](#)

### Introduction

It has been noted that Afghanistan's history is replete with invasions, terrorism, internal and external conflicts, and the Cold War. Afghanistan is a nation beset by several problems and disagreements. There have been numerous disputes and clashes in this country since Alexander the

Great's conquest. The Afghan people disobey international and domestic laws, which is one of the main causes of these problems along with illiteracy, backwardness, and a weak cultural legacy. They follow customs and laws unique to themselves. In 1979, Soviet forces invaded Afghanistan with the support of anti-communist Muslims and the communist party. In order to battle against



communists and guerrillas, who were an anti-government group until 1989, the Soviet Union launched an invasion of Afghanistan.

The selected novel (*The Patience Stone*) for the study is one of the related stories of Afghanistan during the invasion by the USSR. In this novel, the writer focuses on the role of women and the attitude of men to women during the war. *The Patience Stone* is a story about an Afghani woman who faces many difficulties during her life in Afghanistan. It deals with the story of a woman who was living with her paralyzed husband. Her husband becomes paralyzed during the war. She faces much violence and her life has become stuck. She has become the victim of violence from her husband and her father. Her father was a very cruel and strict person. She reveals the story of her past to the marital status of being married. The writer of the story highlights the issues of domestic violence in his novel. The heroin of the novel highlights the issues of physical violence, which she faces many times during her life. Her mother and sister face much physical violence during their life. Her brutal father beat her mother and sister and after her marriage, her husband beat her when she didn't fulfil the sexual needs and other needs of her husband. It is observed by different scholars that in third-world countries women are not treated equally and consider them inferior to men. Even though there are a lot of myths and stereotypes about women that they don't have a good IQ level, motherhood is essential for a woman, they are emotionally weak and not stable and many more are just myths. But nowadays after the consideration of these myths and stereotypes women are getting their lost place and identity.

The study has three different objectives the first objective is to find the reason behind of self-esteem of a woman's character, the second explores the process of self-actualization of a woman's character and the final highlights the exploration of how a woman goes through the process of transformation.

### **Theory of Self-actualization**

(Hoffman, 1988) claims that Maslow is regarded as the founding father of humanistic psychology since he is most recognized for his work on the Hierarchy of Needs. Maslow (1943) categorized needs of human being into five physiological demands, such as clothes, food, and shelter, Security and safety, or

defense, Love, or a sense of inclusion and Self-actualization or self-respect. Self-actualization is one of the needs listed in the Maslow Hierarchy that can be fulfilled after all other needs are satisfied. It varies from person to person since it is a drive to achieve all possible and develop into the best version of oneself. For instance, when we fervently want to fulfill the perfect athlete, parent, or artist role. This could be the pinnacle of self-actualization, reaching one's greatest potential. Maslow (1972) characterized self-actualization as an experience that is completely, intensely, and selflessly experienced with complete focus and absorption—that is, experiencing without the adolescent's self-consciousness.

The need for personal development that leads to self-discovery and is present throughout a person's life is the growth of self-actualization. These new findings give rise to new traits that put one in a position to confront the difficulty of accepting oneself and other people. They don't feel guilty or ashamed of their flaws or shortcomings. Additionally, they are straightforward, honest, and devoid of prejudice. A self-actualized individual depends on the truth, and their exceptional ability to discern the false and dishonest comes from their more effective and accurate view of reality.

A self-actualized person, according to McLeod (2007), is someone who typically has a thoughtful sense of humour, is willing to find humour in situations, and occasionally teases oneself, but does not make fun of other people's feelings. After this point, they can manage any circumstance and have grown brave and self-assured. They only pay attention to their wants and desires, not caring about the environment. They even possess the bravery to solve problems outside of themselves by helping others find solutions in the outer world, a concept known as problem-centering. However, they also exhibit a great deal of spontaneity in both their internal and external cognitive processes, leading to adherence to societal norms and expectations. Thus, even if all needs are met, it is still anticipated that replacement dissatisfaction and restlessness may arise until the person is carrying out their assigned duties (Maslow, 1954).

### **Analysis of the Related Literature**

Literature is becoming an interdisciplinary field,

encompassing more than just the presentation of literary elements. Studying literature has always involved more than just its literary components; it has also involved connections to history, gender studies, sociology, psychology, and anthropology. Different methods, such as feminist literary criticism, Marxist literary criticism, sociological literary criticism, and anthropological literary criticism, are produced by this kind of relationship. According to each of such methods, literary studies' psychological subfield reads and interprets literature using a variety of psychological concepts and theoretical frameworks.

Psychology and literature are both concerned with people and their ways of living. Literature deals with how people interpret life and their imaginations, whereas psychology studies actual life situations. The relationship between literature and psychology in literature theories refers to the psychological analysis of writers as a type and particular of the creative process, to the psychological types and laws that are present in literary works, or, finally, to the impact of literature on readers (Wellek & Warren, 1948). One way to define psychology would be as the science of human behavior. In addition, literary psychology is the study of literature that views literary works as psychological activities in which the writer employs their thoughts and emotions (Endraswara, 2003).

According to (Mishra, 2016b), there are a few reasons psychology and literature are included in literary studies. The first is that it helps us comprehend the motivations and behaviours of literary characters. It could be indirect or direct. The motivation and attitude of the character are seen as typical human behaviour in everyday situations. This makes it possible to determine whether real-world characters in literature behave or are motivated similarly to those in real life. The mental or inner emotion of the character that would present the people's behaviour and motivation of that time is always the author's main focus. The second one has to do with comprehending human motivation and behaviour as well as that of the writer. The third one comprehends the audience or reader's reaction, which occurs after the reading (Mishra, 2016b). The study of psychology in literature is crucial for comprehending literary concepts since it provides insights into characterization, for example. In addition, it provides input to the researchers as they

work on character development.

Furthermore, humanistic psychology emphasizes that the human body is composed of numerous parts, plays a crucial role in day-to-day activities, and is ultimately guided in a positive direction. Stated differently, humans can be thought of as a complete picture of requirements connected to various body components. Human motivation and personality are influenced by our needs and desires. Understanding the motivations and personalities of people is similar to understanding ourselves. Therefore, it is essential for us to comprehend our own basic requirements in order to have a deeper understanding. Furthermore, meeting all of those demands has a significant impact on human growth.

Since one of the most fundamental human needs is psychological, a person who lacks basic needs like food, water, safety, and oxygen will find it difficult to satisfy any other need, such as a physiological need. Maslow successfully identified these needs in 1954 and arranged them into a hierarchy of needs (Maslow, 1987). According to Maslow (1987), the hierarchy of needs forms the basis of motivation theory and serves as the core of personality motivation. Literature frequently explores the idea of the yearning to belong to someone or something. However, the theme is rarely explored in detail in literature. People who are oblivious to their cruel behaviour may result from the lack of this requirement.

The need for self-actualization is at the top of the hierarchy of needs. Even when one's basic requirements are met, performance is frequently lacking unless one is well suited for the role. In short, the worried people are attempting to discover their hidden skills, but they still need to stay loyal to who they are. What one desires to be is what one needs to self-actualize. Through this technique, an individual might discover their secret gift and become the performer they desire to be.

Maslow developed a new theory that is widely accepted s hierarchy of needs. He created what he called the hierarchy of needs—five more general stages—despite all of the demands, including those for food, water, air, and sex. These include the urge for self-actualization, self-esteem, safety and security, belonging and love, and physiology. The study discusses each in the correct order,

emphasizing self-actualization as the final one. They all have a specific place in the hierarchy, as has been stated. They are all reliant on one another. Everyone will arrive in the correct order, and if one is not met, the other needs won't arise and the concerned person won't be disturbed, forcing him to search for and locate it.

The study is descriptive in essence and nature, with a foundation in qualitative methodology. The concept of "self-actualization" is developed and applied as a theoretical framework in order to adequately represent Abraham Maslow's theory. Fundamentally, it is qualitative since it is intended to be implemented and launched by textual methods within Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs theoretical framework, with a focus on self-actualization. Content analyses, book analyses, relevant research publications, and research journals use as sources. Methods for gathering data include reading the text and comprehending, evaluating, and assessing Atiq Rahimi's novel "The Patience Stone."

### **Analysis of The Original Text (The Patience Stone)**

The original text's explanation of "the woman's self-actualization" in Atiq Rahimi's "The Patience Stone" is analyzed. The process of "a woman's attainment of self-actualization based on Abraham Maslow's theory of human motivation" is the researcher's main focus. Maslow's Hierarchy of Human Needs, which he created, divides motivation into five categories: physiological needs, safety needs, love and belonging needs, self-esteem needs, and self-actualization needs. For the purposes of this study, the researcher will only concentrate on self-actualization needs, which can be defined, as the desire to become anything one is capable of becoming.

The fact that, Afghani women's lives are filled with struggles and hardships and that their circumstances are extremely sympathetic is bothersome. Since men predominate in Afghani society, women were viewed as inferior and subservient. In a culture where men rule, women are viewed as nothing more than domestic objects or commodities, and men have complete authority and rights both within and outside the home. In a society like this, women have no rights. Not even they can make a decision. Women are perceived as having no rights in such a society to conduct their lives as they

see fit. They are unable to live as free men. In this kind of culture, women are taken advantage of in the guise of social standards and regulations. Their entitlement to an education is nonexistent. They are not allowed to labor outside. They are forced to marry the person of their choice and suit. They are unable to select their career by their personal preferences. They fought for their fundamental rights before the Taliban came, but their strict tribal laws have made it impossible for them to pursue employment, education, proper healthcare, or personal freedom.

Rahimi is the writer of the novel "The Patience Stone", basically he is a film-maker and writer. He belongs to the Afghan society and he knows the Afghan women and their hardships and their experiences of life, which they face on the basis of their gender. By writing "The Patience Stone", his ultimate purpose is to give voice and face to Afghan women. "The Patience Stone" is based on the theme of self-actualization and emancipation. In this novel "Woman" is the main character and protagonist of this novel and Atiq Rahimi doesn't give a proper name to this main character because of her identity. This takes place in an extremely bizarre setting: a lone room that is hardly larger than a cage, with a man lying unconscious and his wife hunched over him. There's the sound of gunfire; moments later, soldiers will approach terrifyingly close. Everything that happens in this tiny room is recorded, from the death of a fly to the most extreme acts of murder and love, all with the hyper-real serenity of a dream. However, the woman does occasionally disappear. Rahimi makes a clear attempt in her monologue to lift the curtain on the life of Afghan women. She talks about sexual desire, defiance, obedience, and the horrible dehumanization that happens when men and women are unable to communicate openly with one another. She can be quite blunt in certain situations ("You pulled down my knickers without saying a word"), but in other instances, her use of a treasury of Islamic folktales gives her words a mysterious quality. The researcher will highlight the process of self-actualization from the indicated text of the novel since her character goes through it throughout the entire book.

In the beginning of the novel, "the Woman" is very conscious of the surrounding situation and very careful of each and everything. She is incompetent to speak freely, and even she has no verbal speaking

and sometime she speaks some doubtful monologue because that time she knows that this man is the only source of her life and psychology called this states of being as Low Self-esteem that oxford dictionary defines: Feeling self-conscious and lacking confidence are signs of low self-esteem. Individuals who have poor self-esteem may feel awkward, unlovable, or incapable. As the following lines show:

“A hand, a woman’s hand, is residing on his chest, over his heart, rising and ...“On the other hand, the left, She moves them between fingers, telling them silently” (Rahimi, 2008,p.6)

These lines show that the woman is busy caring for her husband properly and she hopes that he will be healthy soon so she makes herself busy in those activities. Her focus is on his health so she applies religious treatment in the form of prayer. Actually, the woman wants his life and she thinks that this is the only hope, because she has applied for medical treatment. She waits for miracle treatment and that comes only in this way to practice such religious activities and she applies it perfectly. Here the researcher would apply the hierarchy of needs which is proposed by Abraham Maslow in Humanistic psychology. Actually, Maslow (1970) has presented these needs for human motivation so all of the stages and hierarchy of needs will be discussed below. The reason behind her low self-esteem is her past life as she was living in male male-dominated society and her life is full of hardship and troubles due to the male-dominated society.

Physiological needs are the basic needs and also act as a motivating force for the survival of humans. (Schulz, 1981). It is concerned with the needs of the human body like food, water, sex, sleep and air. It is one of the basic needs that has an influence over all other needs. According to Maslow, these are the basic needs in the sense that if these are unfulfilled, people go for other needs. The woman cares for the man just for her basic needs as Maslow called physiological needs as the following text shows

“As she again reaches the ninety-ninth “AL-Qahhar”, her hand leaves the man’s chest and travels toward his neck. Her fingers wander into the bushy beard, resting there for or two breaths, emerging to pause a moment on the lips, stroke the nose, the brow, and finally vanish again, into the thickness of filthy hair. (Rahimi, 2008, p.12)

Safety and security come after physiological needs as proposed by Abraham Maslow in the hierarchy of needs. It is one of the fundamental needs of humans, without it humans cannot live properly.

Maslow (1992) proposed that the needs of security and safety are observed mostly in young children because they are helpless and they always depend on their relative and parents. Maslow claims that the fulfillment of these needs require stability, structure, order, protection and freedom from fear and anxiety (Schultz, 1981).

In this novel, the Woman is insecure physically and as well as emotionally. There are different reasons behind it.

The first is ongoing war outside of her home between the fighting factions of Afghanistan as the following paragraph shows

“Somewhere outside, not far away a shot is fired. Another, closer, in retort. The first gunman shoots again.” (Rahimi, 2008, p.6)

“The blinding flash of an explosion. A defending blast makes the earth tremble. Its breath shatters the windows. Throats are torn apart by screaming”. (Rahimi, 2008, p.7)

A transformation comes in the character of the woman and it affects her act as well as her speech. At the beginning of the novel, she is very reluctant and conscious about her actions and speech as she cares for her husband properly and treats him well. She also can't speak freely and boldly but slowly gradually a transformation comes in her character. She is no more reluctant and confused although she becomes bold, and confident and speaks freely without any hesitation. There are some reasons which bring transformation in her personality. The first reason is that she realizes that her husband wouldn't be healthy and he would not be beneficial for her as the following shows

“Seven breaths, and she looks up, wiping her eyes on the sleeve embroidered with ears and flowers of wheat. After looking at the man a while you are all of have left.” She raises her voice: “without you, I have nothing. (Rahimi, 2008, p.12)

Belonging and love play a vital role in human life and without them life becomes miserable and people fall victim to an inferiority complex. When the physical and physiological needs are fulfilled so then these needs emerge. Maslow (1992) proposed that belongingness is a fundamental need that can easily

motivate a person toward attachment and affectionate relationships with people. The fulfilment is concerned with friends, family and other members of the group. It has been observed that humans normally need to feel belonging and acceptance and value of their selves, whether they come from a specific social group or a small social group of people, so in every stage of life, they need to be loved and might be beloved by others. In *The Coming to the Woman* expresses those moments where she had a sense of love and belongingness in the early nights of her marriage with the man as she confessed her love so many times while telling her past memories.

“Her hand slips onto to the man’s chest. “ Or actually to tell you the truth, so that you would keep me. So that you wouldn’t leave me. Yes that’s why I ...she stops herself.[....] Not just because I loved you but so that you wouldn’t abandon me. Without you, I didn’t have anyone. They would all have sent me packing. She falls silent.” (Rahimi, 2008, p.31)

People feel a sense of belonging when they experience love. Following this, a feeling of self-worth emerges. According to Schultz (1981), respect can originate from an individual's sense of self-worth as well as from external sources such as social standing, recognition, and notoriety. Maslow also believes that when a person lacks self-worth, they feel inadequate, defeated, and powerless, and they lack the self-assurance to deal with life's challenges.

After everything I confessed yesterday, you would tell me that I was already a demon as a young child. A demon in my father's eyes was I were? She shakes her head. "O maybe I was... Her silence is full of doubts and uncertainty. But everything I did for you... in order to keep you alive and get your love" (Rahimi, 2008, p.53)

According to Maslow's (1992) theory, achieving self-actualization requires continuous personal development. Additionally, the Woman moves on from the self-actualization stage. The female character in this book can be predicted to reach certain levels of self-actualization. The first one is about breaking free from constraints imposed by one's own culture or the milieu in which she was raised. According to Maslow, the change happens gradually, even if the concerned person is not aware of it. It just unexpectedly takes place, and the

surroundings are what make him or her realize it. According to Maslow's idea of self-actualization, which he mentioned in humanistic psychology, this is the last stage at which the woman achieves self-actualization and realizes her hidden potential. According to Maslow's concept, the self-actualized individual discovers their potential and latent abilities at the last stage.

She behaves like a violent lady after realizing all the injustices and atrocities committed by the male-dominated society. She wants to elope with that boy, who has raped her so many times, and leave his man in the last stage.

At this point, the woman eventually learns the last constraint secret, which makes her life challenging. She hopes to release her tension and be free from all constraints and tensions by keeping this secret. She has to share that secret with everyone before she loses it and goes insane, as described in the line that follows.

“She is moaning. Gradually, words begin to emerge: “what’s gotten into me now?” her head bangs against the wall. “I really am possessed..... Yes I see the dead ...people who are there I am She pulls the black prayer beads from her pocket. are you doing to me? “Allah, help me to regain my faith! Release me! Release from the illusion of these devilish ghosts and shems!” (Rahimi, 2008, p.84)

## **Conclusion**

Within the framework of Abraham Maslow's "self-actualization" theory, the researcher attempts to perform a textual analysis of the novel “*The Patience Stone*” in this study. The goal of the study is to identify the prediction and perpetuation strategies that the book suggests. One of the Maslow hierarchy needs that is pictured at the summit of the pyramid and attained after meeting all the lesser requirements is self-actualization. It varies from person to person since it is a drive to achieve all possible and develop into the best version of oneself.

This is Rahimi, who discusses the situation of women in Afghani culture and he highlights the domestic violence on women to the world. The land of Afghanistan is full of internal and external conflicts and it is always in a state of war. Some critics say that Afghanistan is a very dangerous place for women. Women have been living in very miserable conditions in Afghanistan. According to

Mikkonen (2009), Rahimi's *The Patience Stone* provides a striking depiction of the troubling situation faced by Afghan women. The reader is able to obtain enough information from the unnamed heroine of the novella to draw the conclusion that domestic violence against women is a recurring issue throughout Afghanistan.

The *Patience Stone* highlights the issue of domestic violence and it also describes the pathetic

conditions of the women in Afghanistan. The study explores that how the female character came up with those domestic violence and became an independent and brave woman and at the same time study also encourages the women who are in such pathetic conditions. The study justifies Maslow's Hierarchy of needs through the female protagonist of this novel. It provides an outlook for the further exploration of the self-actualization.

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