

SELF-ACTUALIZATION IN NABILA'S CHARACTER IN THE NOVEL *RIHLAH ILALLAH* BY NAJIB AL-KILANI: LITERARY PSYCHOLOGY ANALYSIS

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Abstract: Nabila's character undergoes various emotional and spiritual journeys that reflect her efforts to achieve self-actualization. However, this process does not occur instantly. Multiple factors influence Nabila's character development, including her life experiences, social environment, personal challenges, and the values she holds. This study aims to describe the hierarchy of needs achieved by Nabila and the characteristics of her self-actualization in Najib Al-Kilani's novel *Rihlah Ilallah*, using Abraham Maslow's literary psychological perspective. Maslow's theory emphasizes individual freedom in expressing opinions and making life choices, while also highlighting the importance of humanity's relationship with the surrounding environment. According to Maslow, individuals reach true happiness when they attain the level of self-actualization. His humanistic theory, known as the Hierarchy of Needs, outlines human motivation as a progression through structured stages. This research employs a descriptive qualitative method, drawing data from the novel *Rihlah Ilallah* and several relevant supporting studies. The results indicate that Nabila's character fulfills all five levels of basic needs: physiological needs, safety needs, love and belonging, esteem, and self-actualization. Additionally, she displays the key traits of a self-actualized individual, including efficient perception of reality, problem-centeredness, high creativity, concern for the welfare of others, and a need for privacy.

المُلْخَص: تمر شخصية نبيلة بالعديد من الرحلات العاطفية والروحية التي تعكس جهودها في تحقيق الذات. ومع ذلك ، فإن عملية تحقيق هذا الذات لا تحدث على الفور. هناك العديد من العوامل التي تؤثر على تطور شخصية نبيلة، سواء من حيث الخبرة الحياتية أو البيئة الاجتماعية أو التحديات التي تواجهها أو القيم التي تؤمن بها. لذلك هذا البحث يهدف إلى وصف وتسلسل الحاجات الإنسانية وخصائص تحقيق الذات في شخصية نبيلة في رواية رحلة إلى الله لنجيب الكيلاني. تتجه هذه نظرية ماسلو على الحرية التي يتمتع بها الأفراد في التعبير عن آرائهم و اختيار خيارات حياتهم بحرية. ليس هذا فحسب، إن هذه النظرية أيضًا مخاوف بشأن الإنسانية فيما يتعلق بيئتها. افترض ماسلو أن الشخص سيشعر

بسعادة عميقة عندما يصل إلى مستوى تحقيق الذات. ولد ماسلو نظرية إنسانية، وهي نظرية التحفيز التي تسمى التسلسل الهرمي لاحتياجات، وهي نظرية الاحتياجات البشرية التي يتم ترتيبها على مراحل. منهج البحث المتبع وصفي نوعي، بمصدر بيانات رواية رحلة إلى الله والعديد من دراسات الأخرى الصلة. وأظهرت نتائج البحث أن الشخصية نبيلة قد تناولت احتياجاتها الخمسة الأساسية. والاحتياجات الأولي التي تناولتها نبيلة الاحتياجات الفسيولوجية واحتياجات الأمان واحتياجات الحب واحتياجات احترام الذات وتناولت نبيلة الحاجة إلى تحقيق الذات من خلال إصدار كتاب باسم نبيلة يحكي المأساة الدامية في السجن الحربي. في شخصية نبيلة أيضا خصائص من تحقيق الذات وهم إدراك الواقع بكفاءة، وتركز على المشكلة، وإبداعا للغاية، ومهما برفاهاية البشرية، وال الحاجة إلى الخصوصية.

Introduction

Individuals who achieve self-actualization possess characteristics that distinguish them from others, especially after their basic needs have been fulfilled. According to Koeswara, these characteristics serve as benchmarks for self-improvement. The process of self-actualization significantly influences a person's psychological condition. When basic needs are unmet, individuals are prone to experiencing psychological disorders (Boeree, 2016). Social conditions also play a reciprocal role in this process. Positive behavior emerges when basic needs are supported by a constructive social environment, and these behaviors are often reflected in everyday life (Endraswara, 2008).

In literary works, psychological states are often revealed through the actions and development of characters. Authors use narrative structures to portray these psychological phenomena, allowing readers to understand complex human emotions and motivations (Nurhidayati, 2018). The ability to create psychologically rich characters can also serve as an indicator of the strength of a fictional narrative (Andriana, 2019). In this regard, Najib Al-Kilani, through his novel *Rihlah Ilallah*, successfully constructs deep psychological profiles for his characters, making it one of the most recognized works in Arabic literature (Emzir & Rohman, 2015).

Rihlah Ilallah is a notable novel by a prominent Egyptian writer. Since its first publication, it has gone through more than twenty printings and is widely acknowledged for its depiction of historical realities in Egypt (As-Saifi, 2020). The novel not only aims to depict historical events but also seeks to open the reader's eyes to their significance. As such, it serves as a reflective critique of past socio-political injustices (Zuhriyah, 2023).

The novel presents multiple characters, each with distinct personalities and roles. This

study focuses on Nabila, a central character who strives to meet her fundamental needs and reach self-actualization under a repressive Egyptian regime (Hasibuan, 2021). Najib Al-Kilani portrays Nabila's resilience amid oppression and her journey toward self-fulfillment, positioning her as a symbolic figure of psychological strength and moral integrity (Oktaviana, 2016).

One of the essential topics in literary research is the study of character psychology. Understanding a character's personality helps uncover the complexity of human nature, including how individuals relate to themselves and their environment. This approach falls under literary psychology, a field that merges literary analysis with psychological theory (Minderop, 2018).

Personality psychology, a subfield of psychology, seeks to explain human behavior through the formation and growth of personality models. It considers both physical and psychological elements as components of a person's identity (Masruroh, 2021).

Previous research on *Rihlah Ilallah* has addressed various themes, such as political authority and social injustice. For example, Nurul Islamiah (2018) conducted a descriptive analytical study on the image of power in the novel (Islamiah, 2018). Mohammad Syaikh examined its portrayal of authoritarian governance and its methods (Syaikh, 2019). Fonna and Syarifuddin applied a literary sociology approach to investigate themes of social injustice (Fonna & Syarifuddin, 2022). Milal adopted Pierre Bourdieu's framework to analyze the ideological conflict between the GAN regime and the IM in the 1954 Mansiyah incident (Milal, 2022).

This current research aims to analyze the fulfillment of Nabila's basic needs and the characteristics of her self-actualization through the lens of Abraham Maslow's literary psychology. Maslow emphasizes the role of human needs in shaping personality. He believes that individuals strive to meet their needs in pursuit of a happier and more meaningful life (Faramitha, 2020). When an individual's environment supports their positive behavior, they are more likely to achieve personal goals. This belief forms the basis of Maslow's renowned theory of motivation: the "Hierarchy of Needs" (Amalia & Yulianingsih, 2020).

Maslow identifies five levels of human needs in this hierarchy: physiological needs, safety needs, love and belonging, esteem, and self-actualization. These needs are arranged in a prioritization structure, commonly referred to as stratified needs (Hambali & Ujam, 2013). The novelty of this study lies in applying Maslow's theory to *Rihlah Ilallah*, specifically to analyze the character of Nabila—an approach not yet explored in previous studies. This research seeks to fill that gap by examining how Nabila achieves her multi-level needs and exhibits traits of self-actualization through Maslow's literary psychological framework.

Method

This study is a form of library research, which involves the collection and analysis of written data sourced from existing texts. The primary focus is on interpreting documented materials to answer the research questions. This research adopts a qualitative descriptive approach, which is commonly used to examine data in the form of words, sentences, and paragraphs. According to (Endaswara, 2013), qualitative descriptive research emphasizes verbal descriptions derived from primary sources.

The main object of this study is the novel *Rihlah Ilallah* by Najib Al-Kilani. The analysis centers on identifying the characteristics of self-actualization as embodied by the character Nabila, who serves as the focal subject of the research. Data collection was conducted through reading and note-taking techniques, enabling the researcher to extract relevant textual evidence (Faruk, 2020). The data analysis follows the Miles and Huberman model, which includes three stages: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing (Olson & Hergenhahn, 2013).

Results and Discussion

This section discusses the fulfillment of Nabila's multi-level needs and her self-actualization traits in *Rihlah Ilallah* by Najib Al-Kilani, analyzed through the lens of Abraham Maslow's literary psychology theory, also known as humanistic psychology (Meigita, 2018). According to this theory, human beings are driven by their fundamental needs to grow and develop into their fullest potential. These needs are structured hierarchically in what Maslow terms the "Hierarchy of Needs." Much like ascending a ladder, one must fulfill the lower-level needs before progressing to higher levels, with self-actualization at the top (Minderop, 2018).

Maslow asserts that the path to self-actualization must be preceded by the fulfillment of basic needs. His theory identifies five core categories: physiological needs, safety needs, love and belonging, esteem, and self-actualization (Rosyidi, 2015).

The Achievement of the Hierarchy of Needs in Nabila in the novel Rihlah Ilallah by Najib Al-Kilani

1. Achievement of Physiological Needs

Physiological needs are the most fundamental and urgent, directly related to human survival and biological maintenance. These include food, water, rest, oxygen, sexual needs, and sensory stimulation (Nurfiqih & Hikmat, 2023). Maslow places these needs at the base of the hierarchy, as they are the most powerful motivators if unmet (Minderop, 2018).

Nabila's efforts to meet her physiological needs are clearly illustrated in the novel (Saputro & Fidayanti, 2020). After enduring the trauma of a war prison, she seeks refuge and peace in

Alexandria. Her first act of recovery is satisfying her basic hunger, as shown in the following excerpt:

ثم تناولت نبيلة إفطارها البسيط المكون من الفول والجبن وكوب الشاي الممزوج باللبن. إن الأيام الماضية مرت وادعة لا يعكر صفوها معكرا. ولم تتعرض لأي انفعال طاغ (Al-Kilani, 2005, p. 108)

"Then Nabila enjoyed breakfast consisting of fava beans, cheese, and tea mixed with milk. The days passed quietly, undisturbed and without emotional turmoil."

This passage portrays Nabila in a moment of calm after experiencing suffering. Her ability to enjoy a simple breakfast symbolizes the fulfillment of her food needs—an essential step in reclaiming her well-being. The mention of nutritious items like beans and milk reflects the bodily restoration necessary after trauma.

In addition to food, clothing is also a basic physiological necessity. Nabila affirms her identity as a Muslim woman by dressing in a way that aligns with her values, even while imprisoned. In a conversation with Salwa, she describes her clothing preferences:

معذرة.. فإن للأخوات زينن الخاص .. مثل هذه.. الطرحة الثياب الطويلة.. والأكمام الضافية. (Al-Kilani, 2005, p. 59)

"I'm sorry, but Muslim women have their own special attire. Like this—headgear, long garments, and wide sleeves."

This dialogue demonstrates that Nabila's clothing is not only a cultural expression but also a fulfillment of her personal and religious needs. Despite being in a prison setting, she upholds this part of her identity, indicating the fulfillment of her clothing needs.

Finally, shelter—another physiological requirement—is illustrated during Nabila's journey to Istanbul. Feeling isolated upon arrival, she immediately seeks a place to stay:

شعرت نبيلة بوحدة مؤلمة وهي تهبط أرض تركيا في "اسطنبول" إنها لا تعرف أحدا، وقصدت لتوها أحد الفنادق المتواضعة لتقيم فيه (Al-Kilani, 2005)

"Nabila felt a painful loneliness when she landed on Turkish soil, in Istanbul. She knew no one and immediately headed to a modest hotel to stay."

This action confirms that Nabila has secured a place of rest and residence, fulfilling the need for shelter. Whether in her hometown or abroad, having a safe space to live is crucial to her physical and emotional recovery.

In summary, Nabila has successfully met all aspects of her physiological needs—food, clothing, and shelter. This foundational fulfillment enables her to advance to the next level of Maslow's hierarchy: the need for safety.

2. Achievement of Security Needs

Maslow explains that the need for security includes safety, stability, protection, legal structure, order, boundaries, and freedom from fear or anxiety. These needs emerge once physiological needs are satisfied. While physiological needs relate to immediate survival, security needs are more concerned with long-term protection and stability (Wahyuni, 2022).

Nabila's desire for safety stems from her isolation and uncertainty while imprisoned during wartime. She lacked protection and stability, which caused her to long for a secure and predictable environment. Her sense of safety begins to be restored when Athwa, the prison chief—and her fiancé—visits her in the war prison. He protects her from the cruelty inflicted by his own subordinates and ultimately frees her. This moment symbolizes her transition from fear to security. As depicted in the novel:

وقد نحوها وهو فاتح ذراعيه. وسرعان ما ألقت بنفسها بين ذراعيه وهي نتحب، فأخذ يلامس شعرها ويغفف دموعها، ويقبل وجنتها، وقد تجمع كل الغضب على وجهه. أخذ يقول "لا تزعجي يا حبيبي" (Al-Kilani, 2005, p. 68)

"Athwa walked toward Nabila with his arms open. Suddenly, Nabila threw herself into his embrace, crying heavily. Athwa stroked her hair, wiped her tears, and kissed her forehead, his face full of anger. Then he said, 'Don't be afraid, my love'"

This passage illustrates that Nabila has begun to experience a sense of safety and emotional security. Athwa, as both a protector and a person in authority, provides reassurance and comfort—helping fulfill her psychological need for long-term safety.

3. Achievement of Belonging and Loving Needs

The need for emotional connection and acceptance becomes significant once physiological and safety needs are met. These relationships may form with family, friends, or romantic partners. According to Maslow, love and belonging needs involve both giving and receiving affection (Saa'diyah et al., 2024). Nabila fulfills this need through her deep emotional bond and eventual marriage to Dr. Salim. Their relationship is based on mutual affection, trust, and shared struggle. The following passage from the novel captures this emotional fulfillment:

ومال نحوها قائلًا: كيف أتزوج معزولا سياسيا؟ قال: وماذا يفعل المعزول السياسي؟؟؟
قالت: لا أدرى. يتزوج معزولة مثله. وقال سالم: والأستاذ عبد العزيز السياسي في مقام أبيك.
طأطأت رأسها قائلة: أجل. عاد يقول: وسنبدأ معاً من جديد رحلة أخرى. ردت قائلة: لقد بدأنا
منذ التقينا أول مرة. (Al-Kilani, 2005, p. 319)

"How can I marry a political outcast?" Nabila asked. 'What do outcasts do?' Salim replied. 'They marry each other,' she said. Salim added, 'Mr. Abdul Aziz will represent your father.' Nabila bowed her head and said, 'Yes.' 'We will begin a new journey together,' Salim said. 'We started the moment we first met,' Nabila replied"

This conversation reflects their mutual decision to begin a life together. Nabila accepts Salim's proposal and finds in him not only a partner but also a source of emotional support and belonging. Maslow notes that genuine love is characterized by trust and respect—both of which are evident in Nabila's relationship.

4. Achievement of Self Esteem Needs

Maslow divides the need for esteem into two categories: internal (self-respect, confidence, independence, and personal strength) and external (recognition, appreciation, and respect from others). When these needs are fulfilled, individuals feel competent and valued, which strengthens their sense of self-worth and productivity (Hambali & Ujam, 2013). Nabila demonstrates a strong sense of self-esteem through her intelligence, moral integrity, and graceful appearance. These qualities earn her admiration and respect from those around her. An excerpt from the novel illustrates this: (Hambali & Ujam, 2013). Nabila demonstrates a strong sense of self-esteem through her intelligence, moral integrity, and graceful appearance. These qualities earn her admiration and respect from those around her. An excerpt from the novel illustrates this:

كان جمالها يدبر الرؤوس، وكانت ثقافتها الواسعة تفرض الاحترام لها في أي مجتمع تأتي إليه،
ولهذا كان اعتزازها بشخصيتها ورأيها، دون صلف أو غرور، ومن ثم أحبت الناس وأحبوها

(Al-Kilani, 2005)

"Her beauty made heads turn. Her broad knowledge commanded respect in every society she entered. As a result, she took pride in her personality and opinions, without arrogance or pride. She loved people, and they loved her."

This passage confirms that Nabila receives admiration both for her physical appearance and intellectual depth. She maintains confidence in her values and opinions, not out of arrogance but self-awareness. These affirmations from others contribute to her overall self-esteem, fulfilling Maslow's fourth level of human needs.

5. Achievement of Self Actualization Needs

Self-actualization is the process of discovering and fulfilling one's true identity and potential. Maslow describes this state as becoming "fully human." However, achieving self-actualization is not guaranteed for every talented or productive individual. It requires psychological health, personal growth, and a deep awareness of one's own potential (Hikma, 2018; Nurfiqih & Hikmat, 2023).

In the case of Nabila, self-actualization is achieved when she realizes her goal of sharing her voice and truth with the world. After enduring hardship, she publishes a book based on her personal thoughts and traumatic experiences, particularly the atrocities she witnessed in the war prison. She boldly includes her real name on the cover despite the danger it poses to herself, her family, and her community. This act reflects Nabila's moral courage and the full realization of her intellectual and emotional capacities.

The following quote from *Rihlah Ilallah* illustrates Nabila's moment of self-fulfillment:

وألفت نبيلة البيئة الجديدة أو كادت، ولم تكدر تذكر أنها تشعر بقدر من السعادة لا بأس به، وخاصة عندما أمسكت بكتابها الجديد المطبوع.. أخذت تنظر إلى اسمها المنقوش عليه في فخر، ثم قربته من فمهما وقبلته في حنان وكأنها تقبل أباها وأمها وأخواتها وأخواتها.. الكتاب قطعة منها.. بعض من روحها وعقلها، بل هو في نفس الوقت سوط ألهمت به رأس الطغيان وجسدها؟ (Al-Kilani, 2005)

"Nabila began to grow accustomed to her new environment and admitted to feeling a quiet happiness—especially when she held her newly published book. She looked at her name engraved on the cover with pride, then brought the book to her lips and kissed it tenderly, as if she were kissing her father, mother, and siblings. The book was a part of her—part of her soul and mind. At the same time, it was a whip lashing the head and body of tyranny."

This powerful excerpt shows Nabila's sense of identity, pride, and mission. Her book is not only a reflection of her personal truth, but also a symbolic act of resistance. The publication becomes a form of "jihad" against tyranny, aligning with Maslow's definition of self-actualization as the pursuit of meaning, creativity, and purpose.

Characteristics of Self-Actualization in the Character of Nabila in the Novel Rihlah Ilallah by Najib Al-Kilani

1. Perceive reality efficiently

One of the most notable traits of self-actualized individuals, according to Maslow, is the ability to perceive reality accurately and objectively. This means seeing things as they truly are—without distortion from personal biases, desires, or fears (Hamdi et al., 2021; Koeswara, 2016). Self-actualized individuals tend to view the world with clarity and maintain a realistic understanding of complex issues in areas such as politics, ethics, or social justice.

Nabila demonstrates this characteristic by recognizing the corruption and tyranny within the Egyptian government and taking action to oppose it. Her response to injustice is not impulsive, but grounded in a moral understanding of her responsibility as a citizen. Despite the personal risk, she chooses to report the abuses committed by state officials directly to the president. Her clear perception of reality—and the consequences of inaction—drives her to speak out. This trait is evident in the following passage:

الصدق والأمانة والخوف على مصلحة الوطن أرادت أن ترفع الأمر للرئيس نفسه، أعلى سلطة في البلاد ولو أن كل إنسان تقوّع على نفسه، واعتصم بالصمت، ليبعد عن نفسه المتابع المتوقعة، وليدرأ عن نفسه الشبهات، لسارات الأمور م من سيء إلى أسوأ، ولتراتكمت

الأخطاء، وأدى ذلك إلى انفجار مروع لا يعلم إلا الله مداه، وثم أقنعت نبيلة نفسها بضرورة ما فعلت وبمدى أهمية، وأنها على الصواب لا شك فيه. (Al-Kilani, 2005, p. 148)

"Out of honesty, integrity, and concern for her country's well-being, Nabila resolved to bring the matter to the president—the highest authority. She believed that if everyone remained silent to avoid trouble or suspicion, the situation would only worsen. Mistakes would accumulate and lead to a catastrophic explosion whose impact only God could predict. Nabila convinced herself of the necessity and importance of her actions, and that she was undoubtedly doing the right thing."

This passage highlights Nabila's clarity of thought and sense of foresight. Her actions are not only based on personal suffering but also on her understanding of the broader societal consequences of silence. In this way, Nabila exhibits one of the core characteristics of self-actualization—efficient perception of reality combined with moral conviction and personal responsibility.

2. Problem Centered

Another characteristic of self-actualized individuals, as outlined in Maslow's theory of humanistic psychology, is being problem-centered. These individuals focus their attention not on personal issues, but on tasks or problems beyond themselves. They are driven by a sense of mission or purpose that transcends self-interest and reflects a broader concern for humanity (Feist & Feist, 2010). Nabila exemplifies this trait through her commitment to societal issues, despite not being politically affiliated. As a schoolteacher, she dedicates herself to educating her students, yet her concern extends far beyond the classroom. She actively criticizes corrupt policies and the misuse of power by state officials and ministers. This commitment is shown in the following dialogue:

ولكنك كنت تنتقدون بعض التصرفات في المرافق العامة والوزارات وبعض الكبار. قالت نبيلة:
لو حدث ذلك، فإن لا غبار عليه، لأنه من صميم حق كمواطنة شريفة، يهمها أن تتطور الأمور إلى أحسن دائمًا. ابتسם الرجل في خبث وقال: "وكلت واثقاً أنك ستكونين عاقلة وتعترفين.. وقد اعترفت. (Al-Kilani, 2005, p. 65)

"But you often criticize public policies and the actions of ministers and senior officials," he said. Nabila replied, "Even if that's true, there's nothing wrong with it. It is my right as an honorable citizen to care about the progress of my country." The man smiled slyly and said, 'I was sure you were smart enough to admit it—and you have."

This quote reveals Nabila's strong sense of civic responsibility. Despite her role as a teacher, she shows deep concern for national governance and societal well-being. Her personal mission reflects a self-actualized focus on external problems rather than internal gratification.

3. Highly Creative

High creativity is another defining feature of self-actualized individuals. According to Maslow, these individuals rely on their inner potential and maintain independence from external pressures. Their creativity is not merely artistic but is expressed through problem-solving, strategic thinking, and moral imagination (Nurwahidah et al., 2023). Nabila demonstrates creativity not through art, but through her clever and strategic approach to navigating danger. When confronted with the manipulative control of Athwa, a powerful prison warden, she devises a plan to gain his trust in order to reunite with her friend Salwa—despite a prohibition on contact between prisoners. This scene shows her initiative:

أدركت أنها لا بد أن تفعل شيئاً كي تكتسب ثقته ورضاه، حتى تدبر أمرها بهدوء. ومن ثم اقتربت منه. ووضعت يدها على كتفه. وهي واقفة إلى جواره وقال: أين سذهب الليلة؟ ابتسم في سعادة وقال: بالتأكيد لن نذهب إلى السينما. وكانت تجلس إلى جواره في سيارته الأنيقة (Al-Kilani, 2005)

"Nabila realized she had to do something to gain Athwa's trust and consent so she could manage things calmly. She approached him, placed her hand on his shoulder, and while standing beside him, said, 'Where are we going tonight?' Athwa smiled with satisfaction and replied, 'Certainly not to the cinema.' Nabila then sat beside him in his elegant car."

This excerpt illustrates Nabila's resourcefulness and emotional intelligence. Her ability to navigate complex social situations with calculated calmness demonstrates self-confidence and a proactive spirit—hallmarks of self-actualized creativity.

4. Concerned For the Welfare of Humanity

Self-actualized individuals possess a deep concern for others. Their high social interest manifests as empathy, compassion, and a genuine desire to improve the lives of those around them (Indriani et al., 2022). This altruism is not superficial but stems from emotional depth and a sense of shared humanity.

Nabila consistently shows compassion toward others—especially the marginalized. Her concern for social justice is not limited to political commentary but is visible in small, sincere actions. One poignant example is her encounter with an elderly, blind man on the street:

أفاقت من هواجسها.. وجدت رجلاً أعمى يتوكل على عصا، توقف أعمى ومال بوجهه المجدور صوبها، وقال: مظاهرة؟ نظرت إليه، كان على وشك أن يخوض في بركة قنطرة من الماء. اقتربت منه، وأمسكت بيده تدلله على الطريق النظيف. فتحت حقيبها، ثم أخرجت ورقة مالية دستها في يدها قائلة: "خذ هذا". رفع الجنية إلى شفتيه وقبله شاكراً وهو يقول: هذه كرامة. (Al-Kilani, 2005, p. 203)

"Nabila snapped out of her thoughts and saw a blind man leaning on his cane. He turned his scarred face toward her and asked, 'A protest?' Nabila looked at him—he was about to step into a dirty puddle. She approached, took his hand, and guided him to a clean

path. Then she opened her bag, handed him some money, and said, 'Take this.' The blind man lifted the money to his lips, kissed it gratefully, and said, 'This is a blessing.'

This scene captures Nabila's instinctive compassion. She does not hesitate to help, regardless of the man's condition. Her response is immediate, kind, and sincere—reflecting the deep empathy and human solidarity that characterize self-actualized individuals.

5. Need For Privacy

One of the key characteristics of self-actualized individuals, according to Abraham Maslow's theory of humanistic psychology, is the need for privacy and quality time alone. These individuals rely on their internal values and emotions to navigate life rather than seeking constant interaction with others (Olson & Hergenhahn, 2013). Unlike most people, whose needs are often externally driven, self-actualized individuals prioritize solitude and introspection. They are frequently perceived as socially detached, not due to antisocial tendencies, but because their inner strength and autonomy reduce their reliance on conventional social relationships (Sugara & Hanifa, 2024). This trait is exemplified in the character of Nabila, who demonstrates emotional resilience in the face of both personal and environmental challenges. Upon learning of her father's illness and the acts of intimidation perpetrated by Athwa against her family, she retreats to her room, overcome with emotion. Simultaneously, she reflects on the atrocities committed against prisoners of war, which compels her to document these injustices through her writing. These moments of solitude provide her with the space to process complex emotions and convert them into productive expression.

An excerpt from *Rihlah Ilallah* by Najib Al-Kilani vividly portrays Nabila's inner turmoil and her recourse to solitude:

وأخذت تجفف دموعها وحيدة في غرفتها بسكن المدراس، ورأسها يغلى بالغضب والثورة، إن
الظلم نار متفرق، لا تفرق بين طفل وشيخ، ولا بين الجاني أو البريء، ولا ظلم أو المظلومين،
لقد اضطربت الرؤية، وتابعت معالم الطريق، واختلط الحق بالباطل، وأصبح العالم في نظرها
غابة موحشة يسودها الرعب والفساد، وعلى الرغم من اندماجها في العمل وقضاء وقت
الفراغ في تسجيل أفكارها وذكرياتها، وقراءة بعض الدراسات الإسلامية والسياسية والأدبية.

(Al-Kilani, 2005, p. 260)

"She wiped her tears alone in her room in the teachers' dormitory. Her head was boiling with anger and rebellion. Tyranny is a burning fire that does not distinguish between a child and an elder, between the guilty and the innocent, between the oppressor and the oppressed. The lines of vision have blurred, the road signs have vanished, and truth has become indistinguishable from falsehood. To her, the world appears as a haunted forest governed by fear and corruption. Despite her active involvement in work, she spent her free time recording her thoughts and memories and reading Islamic, political, and literary texts."

This passage illustrates Nabila's self-actualizing nature. Her tendency to spend time alone—reflecting, writing, and reading—demonstrates her reliance on internal values to navigate adversity. Her solitude is not escapism but a deliberate and constructive means of confronting personal and societal challenges. Through these reflective practices, Nabila embodies the traits of a self-actualized individual as envisioned by Maslow.

Conclusion

This study has demonstrated that the character of Nabila in *Rihlah Ilallah* by Najib Al-Kilani exhibits a comprehensive fulfillment of Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs, culminating in self-actualization. Through a psychological literary analysis grounded in Maslow's theory of humanistic psychology, the character's developmental trajectory is traced through successive levels of need satisfaction, each of which is distinctly portrayed in the narrative. Nabila's physiological needs—including access to food, clothing, and shelter—are met following her release from imprisonment. Her safety needs are fulfilled through the protection and emotional support provided by Athwa, who offers consistent care and concern for her well-being. The need for love and belonging is satisfied through her mutual affection with Dr. Salim, a relationship that progresses toward marriage. Esteem needs are addressed as Nabila gains social recognition and respect for both her intelligence and appearance, reflecting her elevated status in the community. Ultimately, Nabila achieves self-actualization through the publication of a book written in her own name—an act that signifies the realization of her creative and intellectual potential, as well as her capacity for independent thought and expression.

In addition to meeting these hierarchical needs, Nabila exemplifies the distinctive characteristics of self-actualized individuals as identified by Maslow. She demonstrates a realistic perception of the world, particularly in her critical awareness of systemic tyranny and its potential to destabilize Egypt's socio-political landscape. Her problem-centered orientation is evident in her proactive stance toward addressing societal issues, despite the constraints of her professional role as a history teacher. Nabila exhibits high levels of creativity, notably in her strategic deception of Athwa to secure a visit to Salwa in the war prison. Her altruism and moral concern for humanity are reflected in her efforts to assist marginalized groups, including beggars, the homeless, and prisoners of war. Moreover, her need for privacy is portrayed through moments of solitary reflection and writing, wherein she processes personal and social turmoil and channels these experiences into literary production.

The findings of this research contribute to the broader discourse on character analysis in Arabic literature through psychological frameworks. This study recommends further scholarly exploration of *Rihlah Ilallah* using alternative psychological models, such as Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic theory, to uncover additional dimensions of character development. Moreover,

the application of Maslow's humanistic psychology may be extended to other literary texts within Arabic literature, thereby enriching interdisciplinary approaches to literary criticism. This research affirms the value of integrating psychological theory into literary analysis, offering nuanced insights into character construction, thematic depth, and narrative strategy.

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