

Madeline's Struggle to Get Her Self-Actualization in Nicola Yoon's *Everything, Everything*

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ABSTRACT

This research aims to discuss the issue of the struggle to achieve self-actualization in Nicola Yoon's *Everything, Everything*. The research aims to analyze two points: Madeline's struggles in search of self-actualization in Nicola Yoon's *Everything, Everything*, and Madeline's needs in Nicola Yoon's *Everything, Everything*. This study applies the psychological approach and theory of human needs by Abraham Maslow. Based on the analysis, the writer reveals that despite her limitations, Madeline yearns for love, independence, and the truth about her condition. She also meets her basic needs for physiological needs and safety needs. Through her relationship with Olly and the support of her friend Carla, Madeline finds love and belonging needs, and esteem needs. Ultimately, Madeline breaks free from her confinement, embraces her true self, and pursues a life without boundaries. This novel shows that everyone has needs and struggles, but humans can find fulfillment with determination so that their self-actualization as humans is fulfilled.

Keywords: *Abraham Maslow's Theory, Human needs, Psychological Approach, Self-Actualization, Struggle*

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1. INTRODUCTION

Humans are the most perfect creatures created by God. Humans are equipped with common sense to survive. Humans are complex creatures with several needs. The need motivates them to take action to meet the unavoidable essential needs. This need means the humans need to continue their life. Thus, many variations of human needs must be met. One of the basic human needs is to be healthy, which must be satisfied before other needs (Cairo, 1998:76). For example, humans who are sick must struggle to heal themselves, and humans who are sick must struggle to get food. The struggle is an essential part of the human experience, which can help build self-development and realize the purpose in life.

Struggle can be an important factor in meeting human needs, including self-actualization. Maslow in Mcleod (2018:1) stated that unfulfilled needs motivate people. Humans will move on to the next higher needs after the most basic human needs are met. This theory is usually presented as a pyramid with the most basic needs at the bottom and progressing to higher levels of needs. These needs are as follows, from bottom to top: Physiological needs, safety needs, love and belonging needs, esteem needs, and self-actualization. Self-actualization is a natural human tendency. Once the previous needs have been met, individuals can focus on self-actualization and reaching their full potential.

The struggle to achieve self-actualization is found in the main character in Nicola Yoon's *Everything, Everything*. This novel tells a story about Madeline Whittier, a 17-year-old girl who lives only in the house because she has a rare disease. She has a rare disease called Severe Combined

Immunodeficiency (SCID). The disease causes Madeline to have to stay in the house under strict supervision. She was cared for by her mother, Pauline Whittier, who worked as a doctor and her daily nurse named Carla. She accepts her health and finds fulfillment in her daily life with the support of her mother and nurse Carla. But when her new neighbors move in, Maddie struggles between accepting her own life and challenging her destiny in her limitation. The struggle for Madeline to fulfill the highest level of her needs is interesting to discuss.

Based on the discussion above, the writer is interested in conducting an analysis that focuses on the struggle to achieve self-actualization as a higher need reflected in Nicola Yoon's *Everything, Everything* novel, illustrated by the main character Madeline Whittier. Madeline struggles to fulfill her human needs, especially the need for self-actualization. This analysis is based on Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of human needs.

2. METHOD

The descriptive qualitative method is the writer's research strategy in this study. According to Lambert (2012: 255-256), the qualitative descriptive technique is proper when researchers want to know who participates in events, what is involved, and where things happen. The purpose of qualitative descriptive research is to provide a complete summary of specific events experienced by individuals or groups of persons in daily words. The writer explains the illustrations that occur to the main character in this study. In this study, descriptive is used since the research goal is to discover the illustrations that appear in the characters, and it covers "how" and "why" research issues, allowing for a more profound and more accessible comprehension of the analysis.

Data collection in this study done by the writer reads many times and understands the stories of the novel *Everything, Everything*. Then, the writer focuses on the main character of the novel *Everything, Everything*, Madeline Whittier and gives a sign to the dialogues and narratives that contain aspects of the struggle to fulfill human needs to the highest level, namely self-actualization. The last, the writer collects data and categorizes it according to the hierarchy of human needs. In this study, the writer applies Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory. The writer uses Maslow's hierarchy of needs to analyze Madeline's struggle to get her self-actualization in Nicola Yoon's *Everything, Everything* with a psychological approach. The data are analyzed using a psychological approach, and the writer describes and identifies the struggle of the main character to get self-actualization and fulfill a hierarchy of human needs.

Data analysis procedures in this research are divided in three steps. The first step is Classifying the data from the novel according to hierarchy of human needs. The second step is analyzing and interpreting the data is categorized as a hierarchy of human needs in Madeline's character. The last step is concluding the research based on the result of the analysis.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

3.1 The Factors To Contributing Madeline's Struggle To Get Self-Actualization In Nicola Yoon's *Everything, Everything*

Madeline is a 17-year-old girl who has not left her house in 17 years. Madeline Whittier's mother, Pauline Whittier, is a doctor. Pauline is a single mother after her husband and her first kid were killed in a vehicle accident. As a result, she lives by herself with her daughter, Madeline. Pauline and Madeline's live changed after that happened. Pauline is concerned about her only kid. She confined Madeline because she has Several Combined Immunodeficiencies (SCID), often known as "bubble baby disease." Carla, Madeline's day nurse, assists her.

“Basically, I’m allergic to the world. Anything can trigger a bout of sickness. It could be the chemicals in the cleaner used to wipe the table that I just touched. It could be someone’s perfume. It could be the exotic spice in the food I just ate. It could be one, or all, or none of these things, or something else entirely. No one knows the triggers, but everyone knows the consequences. According to my mom I almost died as an infant. And so I stay on SCID row. I don’t leave my house, have not left my house in seventeen years.” (Yoon, 2015: 3)

The quotation above illustrates Madeline's difficulties, as she is allergic to different environmental components. These allergies have the potential to make people unwell. Triggers might range from chemicals in cleaners to perfumes to certain spices in cuisine. Madeline's mother, Pauline, claims that Madeline nearly died as a newborn due to these allergies. As a result of SCID, Madeline has been confined to her house for the past seventeen years, practically living in isolation.

3.1.1 The Discovery Of Love

Madeline Whittier's relationships are essential to her ongoing quest for self-actualization. As she digs into the depths of this tremendous affection, Madeline realizes the intricacies and challenges that love brings to her perfectly ordered world. Love becomes both a source of freedom and a barrier, testing the bounds of its lonely life. Madeline's relationships with others inspire her to confront her fears, desires, and limitations. Madeline is drawn to their adolescent son, Olly, when a new family moves in next door. The discovery of love, signified by Olly's presence, becomes important in Madeline's fight for self-actualization. According to Maslow's hierarchy of wants, love, and belonging are essential human needs that contribute to personal development and fulfillment. Madeline begins to wonder about the restrictions imposed by her isolated livelihood as she establishes a profound emotional connection with Olly.

We both open our eyes and stare at each other. All at once I’m hyperaware of his body and mine. “There was no touching,” Olly confirms, his eyes never leaving my face. Something in his tone makes me blush hard, and heat travels a slow wave across my face and chest. Spontaneous combustion is a real thing. I’m certain of it. (Yoon, 2015: 68)

The quotation above illustrates that Madeline and Olly open their eyes and look at each other. Madeline becomes acutely aware of their bodies and of Olly's presence. This enhanced awareness implies that they have a solid emotional and physical attraction to one another. Madeline has been isolated for 17 years owing to a medical issue, and she craves genuine human connection and intimacy. This artwork is significant because it highlights Madeline's need for love and relationship. The incredible sentiments and sensations she experiences indicate the depth of her longing for love and its enormous impact on her quest for self-discovery and satisfaction.

My butterflies are rioting. He squeezes my hand and my lips part and we’re tasting each other.” “He leans his forehead against mine. His breath is warm against my nose and cheeks. It’s slightly sweet. The kind of sweet that makes you want more. “Is it always like that?” I ask, breathless. “No,” he says. “It’s never like that.” I hear the wonder in his voice. And just like that, everything changes. (Yoon, 2015: 114)

The quotation above shows Madeline's butterfly riot and expresses her emotional state by conveying delight and fear in the above sentence. Their physical connection is strengthened when Olly squeezes her hand, causing their lips to split to feel one another. This point represents an

increase in intimacy and desire. Olly's statement that it's never been like this proves their connection is incredible and above her expectations. This passionate experience with Olly challenges her preconceived notions about relationships and opens her eyes to new possibilities. It represents the transformative power of love on its road of self-discovery by marking a time when "everything changes." Madeline's encounter with Olly illustrates her desire for a profound emotional and physical connection as a necessary component of self-actualization. As a result of their conversations, she explores her passions, tackles her anxieties, and begins to recast her concept of herself and her place in the world. Love propels personal growth and the pursuit of her potential.

3.1.2 The Desire For Independence

Madeline's longing for freedom is evident throughout the narrative despite her restrictions. Madeline embarks on a quest of self-discovery, fighting against the constraints put on her to attain self-actualization. She befriends Olly, a local adolescent who serves the outside world. Madeline's desire to be self-sufficient grows as a result of their friendship. Madeline begins questioning her overprotective mother's strict standards and the limits of a constrained existence.

Last night, with a credit card, because I want to see the world." "You have a credit card?" "I got my own a few weeks ago. There are perks to hanging out with an older woman. (Yoon, 2015: 157)

The quotation above shows Madeline receiving her first credit card, representing her newly discovered financial independence. She gains autonomy by owning her credit card and can make choices and decisions. This enhanced independence is essential in her self-actualization journey, representing her desire to explore and try new things. Madeline's statement about wanting to travel across the world shows her passion for adventure, exploration, and a larger perspective. It conveys her wish to be free of the constraints of her existence. Madeline's discovery of independence, symbolized by her credit card possession, demonstrates her desire to travel and discover new things. This desire is an essential step on her route to self-actualization.

3.1.3 False Diagnoses

When Madeline discovers she has been misdiagnosed with severe combined immunodeficiency syndrome (SCID), her quest for self-actualization unexpectedly turns. For years, Madeline has been shut away in the safety of her pristine home, believing herself to be highly vulnerable to the outside world. On the other hand, the revelation of a misdiagnosis rocks the foundations of her reality and puts into question the boundaries that define her life. This newfound awareness not only fuels Madeline's skepticism and confusion but also burns her deep desire to break free from the shackles of her perceived condition and live a completely independent life. Madeline embarks on a journey of self-discovery in order to recreate her identity, discover her true self, and achieve self-actualization free of the illusory confines imposed by a misdiagnosed SCID.

I don't believe you have, or have ever had, SCID. I know this must be a shock. I've attached quite a few test results here and I recommend that you get a second (and a third) opinion. I believe that you should get another physician besides your mother to verify my findings. Physicians should never practice on their families. It is my medical opinion that in Hawaii you had an episode of myocarditis triggered by a viral infection. I believe that your immune system is especially fragile given what I could surmise about the nature of your upbringing. Please

feel free to contact me with any questions you may have. Good luck. Best regards, Dr. Melissa Francis (Yoon, 2015: 228)

The quotation above shows evidence of an email from Dr. Melissa Francis that may have had a key role in Madeline's struggle to reach self-actualization due to a faulty diagnosis. The email suggests that Madeline may not have the illness she believes she has, Severe Combined Immunodeficiency (SCID). These insights might be upsetting and disturbing for Madeline because they question her core knowledge of herself and her identity.

We don't know anything? Of course we do. We know that I'm sick. That I'm not allowed to leave my house on pain of death. I've always known this. It is who I am. "What's going on?" I demand. "What are you hiding from me?" "No, no. I'm not hiding anything." "What does this mean?" She sighs, and it is long and deep and weary. "I swear I don't know anything. But sometimes I suspect." "Suspect what?" "Sometimes I think maybe your mama's not quite right. Maybe she never recovered from what happened to your papa and brother." (Yoon, 2015: 233)

The quotation above illustrates Madeline talking to Carla, her nurse. Madeline expresses her frustration and confusion regarding her condition. She believes that she is sick and unable to leave her home because of her diagnosis. Madeline always knows this and she sees it as an integral part of her identity. Carla hints at the possibility that Madeline's mother, who plays a key role in her medical care and the restrictions placed on her, may not be completely honest or well informs about Madeline's condition. Carla believes that Madeline's mother may not have fully recovered from the traumatic events involving Madeline's father and brother. Madeline's false diagnosis or inaccurate understanding of her condition, potentially influenced by her mother's unresolved trauma, may contribute to her struggle for self-actualization. These false beliefs and boundaries can prevent her from fully exploring their potential and experiencing the world, hindering their journey to personal fulfillment.

3.2 Madeline's Needs Fulfilment In Search Self-Actualization In Nicola Yoon's *Everything, Everything*

According to Maslow's hierarchy of needs, self-actualization is the highest level of psychological development that a person can achieve. It refers to fulfilling one's potential, pursuing personal growth, and finding meaning and purpose in life. However, before attaining self-actualization, one must first satisfy the lower-level needs in the hierarchy, such as physiological, safety, love, and belongingness needs. In this case, Madeline's human needs are fulfilled primarily through her mother, Pauline Whittier, and her nurse, Carla.

3.2.1 Physiological Needs

Physiological needs are the most basic need for human life. These needs encompass the essential components of human bodily well-being and serve as the foundation for developing higher-level wants and motivations. According to Maslow, physiological requirements include food, sleep, water, air, and shelter. Madeline's physical health is critical in this situation; she needs protection, food, and the atmosphere to survive. Madeline is confined to her house and lives in solitude due to her condition, making satisfying her physiological needs critical to her survival and quality of life.

THE SUNROOM IS my favorite room in the house. It's almost all glass—glass roof and floor-to-ceiling glass windows that look out onto our perfectly manicured back lawn. (Yoon, 2015: 63)

This is some crazy room," he says, looking around. "Yeah. My mom built it so I could feel like I was outside. (Yoon, 2015: 65)

The sunroom provides Madeleine with a link to the outdoors while remaining within. Madeleine's mother custom-built a sunroom to give her the feeling of being outside. This highlights the significance of environment and shelter in addressing physiological demands. As explained, the sunroom meets Madeleine's need for protection and the environmental aspects contributing to her physiological well-being.

3.2.2 Safety Needs

Basic human needs for security and protection are referred to as security needs. After physiological demands are addressed, this need arises. In this scenario, Carla, Madeline's mother, and nurse, attends to her safety requirements. Because of Madeline's sickness and delicate health, both carers are concerned about her safety. Just like in the following quotation: The books are all brand-new hardcovers—no germ secondhand softcovers for me. They come to me from Outside, decontaminated and vacuum-sealed in plastic wrap. (Yoon, 2015: 1)

The quotation above shows Madeline's preference for new hardcover books over worn softcovers. Because of her weakened immune system, she is concerned about dangerous infections and toxins that might threaten her health. Books are decontaminated and vacuum wrapped in plastic wrap to guarantee that she is free of potential sources of infection. This image stresses the significance of safety precautions and procedures in Madeline's life. Decontamination emphasizes the necessity for a regulated and protected environment that minimizes potential dangers and threats to his health. She gains a sense of comfort and certainty that her exposure to hazardous germs or toxins has been decreased by acquiring fresh books that have been decontaminated.

3.2.3 Love and Belonging Needs

The human need for affection and a sense of belonging to a society or group is called the need for love and belonging. The need for love and belonging is essential to her human experience since it is essential for her emotional well-being, connectivity, and general pleasure. In Madeline's case, her solitude emphasizes the importance of this desire. Living in a confined setting with little touch with the outside world might result in emotions of loneliness, alienation, and a need for meaningful relationships. She longs for genuine romantic and platonic connections that may provide him companionship, emotional support, and a feeling of belonging.

He takes a breath. "In my head I know I've been in love before, but it doesn't feel like it. Being in love with you is better than the first time. It feels like the first time and the last time and the only time all at once." (Yoon, 2015: 193)

The quotation above shows Madeline's sentiments for Olly, the guy she loves. Despite having already experienced love, Olly claims that falling in love with Madeline is different and better than prior encounters. She recalls the depth of her emotions, arguing that falling in love with her seemed like the first, last, and only time simultaneously. As it depicts the profound connection and affection between Madeline and Olly, the artwork highlights the categories of love and belonging necessary to

attain self-actualization. Despite Madeline's illness and the difficulties in their relationship, their love and friendship surpass any experience. The quote shows their love is unique and robust, evoking strong emotions in Olly. This condition shows their relationship contributes to their sense of belonging, emotional fulfillment, and personal growth. Their love for one another becomes a significant source of support, happiness, and self-actualization for both individuals.

3.2.4 Esteem Needs

The admiration of each individual is referred to as esteem needs. Madeline's esteem requirements are met by recognizing and acknowledging her unique talents and achievements. It might be via the encouragement and support of her mother, Nurse Carla, or her boyfriend, Olly. Madeline's esteem requirements are addressed when she receives acknowledgment, appreciation, and respect from these individuals, strengthening her self-confidence and creating a sense of self-worth.

She squeezes my leg. "You listen to me now. You're the strongest, bravest person I know. You better believe that." "Carla, you don't have to—" "Shush, listen to me. I've been thinking this over. I could see this new thing was weighing down on you, but I know you're going to be all right." (Yoon, 2015: 29)

The quotation above shows that Carla, Madeline's nurse, reassures her and gives encouragement and support in the passage above. Carla praises Madeline's bravery and strength, underlining that she is the strongest and bravest person she knows. Carla's validation and faith in Madeline's capacity to overcome obstacles is intended to boost Madeline's self-esteem and confidence. Carla helps Madeline feel self-esteem and recognition by expressing praise for her strength. This relationship is critical to Madeline's self-esteem because it makes her feel appreciated, respected, and confident in her talents. Individuals can establish a favorable self-image and a sense of success by getting praise and positive comments from others, contributing to their desire for esteem.

3.2.5 Self-Actualization Needs

Madeline's physiological needs were meticulously supplied in her confined surroundings. Her food habits, medical treatment, and physical surroundings were all meant to assure her well-being and safeguard her weak state of health. When she questioned the depth of her physical limits, she reinterpreted what it meant to be physically fit. This greater understanding of her body's strengths and limits lays the ground for her self-actualization.

Madeline's need for safety and security was initially met through her life of isolation, shielded from the dangers of the outside world. However, as he uncovers the truth about his false diagnosis, he realizes that his safety may have been compromised for reasons beyond his health. By challenging established norms and seeking the truth, she takes control of her safety and security, empowering herself to make choices aligned with her well-being.

Madeline's need for love and belonging is satisfied by her relationships with her mother, nurse Carla, and, finally, Olly. This bond gave him affection, comprehension, and a sense of belonging. The profound link she creates with Olly exposes her to a love that extends beyond the confines of her solitary existence, allowing her to feel more connected and fulfilled.

Madeline's esteem needs are addressed when she challenges her incorrect diagnosis and asserts her uniqueness. She seeks affirmation for her views, feelings, and goals while challenging the controls that have formed her existence. Due to this process, she acquires better self-worth, esteem, and the courage to follow her ambitions.

Meeting these needs eventually led to Madeline's self-actualization. She emerges as a confident individual who has accepted her actual self and is ready to live by her objectives and ambitions. Self-actualization is achieving one's full potential and the freedom to pursue one's path, resulting in a profound sense of personal fulfillment and progress.

EVEN AT 9 A.M. on a Saturday, New York City is just as loud and jam-packed as it's famous for being. The streets are filled with honking, slow-moving cars. The sidewalks teem with people just narrowly missing each other, as if their movements were choreographed. From the back of the cab I let the noise and smells of the city wash over me. I open my eyes wide to take in all the world I see. (Yoon, 2015: 325)

From the quotation above, Madeline's choice to "open her eyes wide to see the whole world" demonstrates her acceptance and openness to new experiences. She was no longer content to observe the world from a distance; she was actively engaged with her surroundings, eagerly absorbing every detail. It denotes a heightened awareness and a willingness to embrace the present moment—critical characteristics of self-actualization.

The writer concludes the quote exemplifies Madeline Whittier's self-actualization as she embraces the vibrant chaos of New York City, opens herself up to new experiences, and actively participates in the world around her. Through her willingness to engage with her environment, she displays a newfound sense of freedom, curiosity, and appreciation for life—an essential aspect of her journey to self-actualization.

4. CONCLUSION

After analyzing Nicola Yoon's *Everything, Everything* novel, several things can be concluded. The protagonist's character becomes the main focus of this novel's research. Tells about Madeline's struggle for self-actualization and her journey to fulfill her human needs. Every human has their own needs, and they all have different struggles to fulfill each other in the process.

In conclusion, Nicola Yoon's novel *Everything, Everything* explores the journey of the protagonist, Madeline Whittier, as she strives for self-actualization and fulfillment of her human needs. Despite her physical limitations due to SCID, Madeline experiences a profound desire for love, independence, and the realization that she may not be as sick as she was led to believe. Through her relationship with Olly and the support of her friend Carla, Madeline's needs for love, belongingness, and self-esteem are met. Her confinement does not hinder her from fulfilling her basic physiological and safety needs. Ultimately, Madeline's determination to break free from her limitations allows her to embrace self-actualization and live a life without restrictions, pursuing her love story with Olly. The novel emphasizes the universal nature of human needs and the resilience of the human spirit in overcoming obstacles to achieve fulfillment.

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