



**Woman Self Defense Portrayed on Jane Green's
Jemima J: An Approach to Psychoanalysis Abraham Maslow**

Ifa Nurdiana

Universitas Billfath, Lamongan, Indonesia

ifandiana1802@gmail.com

Wilujeng Asih Purwani*

Universitas Billfath, Lamongan, Indonesia

wilujengasihp@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

This study is aimed to interpret the self-defense behaviors carried out by lead figures, Jemima Jones in Jane Green's novel *Jemima J* (1998) through the theory of psychoanalysis by Abraham Maslow's which focuses on the love and belonging level. This study employs qualitative literary analysis methodology. It identifies and interprets textual evidence illustrating how the protagonist character did not meet the need for love and belonging leads her emotion, behavior, and self-acceptance. The finding of this research shows Jemima's has some strategies to cope the unmet need of love and belonging such as compulsive overeating, romanticized fantasizing, and internet dating behaviors. It is consistent with Maslow's deficiency motivation theory. Further, the finding is supported by empirical research on emotional eating, body image, and social belonging, placing the literary analysis within a wider discourse of psychology. This study contributes to the expanding application of humanistic psychology in literary criticism and highlights the novel's relevance to current discussion of body image, social connection, and emotional well-being.

Keywords: self-defense mechanism, humanistic psychology, Maslow's hierarchy of needs, Jemima J.

Introduction

For centuries, literary works have offered readers a window into the hidden workings of the human mind. Through the lives of fictional characters, authors give form to emotional experiences that might otherwise remain difficult to articulate, the ache of loneliness, the hunger for acceptance, the quiet devastation of feeling unseen. Jane Green's *Jemima J* (1998) belongs to this tradition. The novel charts the inner life of a young woman whose sense of self is shaped, at almost every turn, by the absence of love and belonging. Reading this text through Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs (1954) allows the analysis to move past plot summary and engage with the psychological architecture underlying Jemima's behavior.

A preliminary clarification is necessary regarding the theoretical framework of this study. Maslow's hierarchy of needs is a product of humanistic psychology and should not be equated with the classical psychoanalysis of Sigmund Freud. Freud's model centered on unconscious drives, libidinal energy, and repression, whereas Maslow's framework organizes human motivation into a conscious hierarchy of five levels: physiological needs, safety needs, love and belonging, esteem, and self-actualization. More recent scholars have revisited and updated Maslow's pyramid by incorporating findings from evolutionary psychology and the behavioral sciences (Kenrick et al., 2010). The present study treats Maslow's model as its primary theoretical tool, while also referencing Freudian defense mechanisms where those concepts illuminate specific behavioral responses, holding the two frameworks in a relationship of complementarity rather than equivalence.

When this paper uses the phrase "self-defense," it refers to something broader than the Freudian ego-protective apparatus. It encompasses the various ways in which Jemima tries to shield herself from the emotional pain of social exclusion, one-sided love, and parental coldness. Certain behaviors, including stress eating and emotional withdrawal, share features with Freudian concepts such as displacement and regression. Others, particularly her attempt to find connection through online dating, are better explained within Maslow's framework as expressions of deficiency motivation at the love and belonging level. This conceptual distinction is observed consistently throughout the analysis that follows.

The protagonist is Jemima Jones, a woman who works for a London newspaper and carries significant physical weight alongside an even more significant psychological burden. She harbors feelings for her colleague Ben Williams that go unacknowledged, and she deeply wants to be valued for more than her professional usefulness. The trajectory of her character from self-doubt toward a tentative kind of self-acceptance makes her well-suited for psychological literary analysis. Previous scholarship has brought Maslow's framework to bear on characters in both fiction and film (Musthofa, 2018; Lumbantoruan & Evyanto, 2021; Sari et al., 2017; Nugroho et al., 2024); the contribution here lies in the sustained focus on how deficiency motivation and coping behavior interact specifically within the contexts of body image and romantic longing.

The decision to focus on the love and belonging level is grounded in what the novel actually shows. Jemima's basic physical and safety needs are, broadly speaking, met; she has housing, employment, and food. What she lacks, persistently and painfully, is the sense of being loved and of belonging somewhere. Maslow (1954) argued that when this level of the hierarchy goes unsatisfied, people tend to experience a particular form of suffering: loneliness, a sense of alienation, and a deep-seated feeling of not being worth much. Recent empirical research affirms this. Bruss et al. (2024) demonstrate a strong correlation between social disconnection and clinical levels of depression, while Zhou et al. (2024) show that women with a pronounced need to belong suffer more acutely from loneliness when relational needs go unmet. Jemima's emotional volatility, her self-sabotaging patterns, and her difficulty building stable relationships all fall within what these findings would predict.

Maslow's hierarchy is widely visualized as a pyramid ascending from physiological necessities at the base to self-actualization at the peak. As Taormina and Gao (2013) explain, the love and belonging level becomes motivationally active once more fundamental needs have been addressed, and it encompasses the desire for close friendships, family bonds, romantic intimacy, and a sense of membership within a larger group. Maslow (1954) observed that the pain produced by deprivation at this level is among the most acute forms of suffering that human beings regularly endure. It is against this theoretical backdrop, deepened by

current empirical work on belonging, body image, and emotional regulation, that the analysis of Jemima's psychology is conducted.

Methods

The research design is qualitative, situated within the tradition of psychological literary criticism. The primary text is Jane Green's *Jemima J* (first published in 1998 by Broadway Books, United Kingdom). Secondary materials were gathered from peer-reviewed journals, academic books, and theoretical texts addressing Maslow's humanistic psychology, Freudian concepts of defense, and prior literary studies that have applied need-based motivational theory. Recent empirical work on body image and belonging deprivation was also consulted to ensure the analysis remains in dialogue with current psychological research.

The primary method of data collection was close reading, which required sustained and attentive engagement with the novel's language, character construction, and narrative patterns (Eppley, 2019). Passages were selected because they bore a clear or indirect relationship to love and belonging needs, or to the coping behaviors that emerge when those needs go unmet. Selected excerpts were then organized thematically to guide the analytical discussion.

Analysis proceeded across three phases. In the first phase, passages were grouped according to the four sub-dimensions of Maslow's love and belonging level: family belonging, acceptance and understanding, love and affection, and intimacy. In the second phase, each passage was read critically to connect the character's actions and responses to Maslow's account of deficiency motivation. In the third phase, where appropriate, findings were placed alongside current research on emotional eating (Annesi, 2023; Fyodorova et al., 2021), body image coping (Matera et al., 2024), and the psychology of belonging (Bruss et al., 2024; Zhou et al., 2024), locating the literary reading within a broader contemporary scholarly conversation. Comparisons were also drawn with earlier literary studies to situate the present work within the field.

Result and Discussion

According to Maslow (1954), the failure to satisfy love and belonging needs does not merely make a person sad, it warps how they see themselves and the people around them, producing an almost frantic drive to restore connection by whatever means are available. In *Jemima J*, this theoretical claim plays out across a number of different domains of Jemima's life. The analysis below is organized into four thematic areas: deficiency in family love, romantic longing, social acceptance, and the narrative consequences of need-based motivation.

1. Deficiency in Family Love as a Formative Condition

One of the foundational premises of Maslow's hierarchy is that unsatisfied needs at lower levels do not disappear but instead persist as deficiency states that color the individual's motivational life well into adulthood (Maslow, 1954). Jemima's story begins with a confession that makes this premise uncomfortably concrete:

"You don't need to know much about my background, suffice to say that my childhood wasn't happy, that I never felt loved, that I never got over my parents' divorce as a young child, and that now, as an adult, the only time I feel really comforted is when I seek solace in food." (Jemima J, p. 2)

What makes this passage significant is not just that it provides biographical context, but that it functions as a kind of self-diagnosis. Jemima is able to name the source of her behavior: a childhood without felt love, followed by an adult life in which food fills the gap that love has left behind. Within Maslow's framework, this is a clear instance of deficiency motivation the need for love cannot be satisfied relationally, so it migrates onto a physiological substitute. This mechanism has empirical support: Annesi (2023) shows that emotional eating in women is largely driven by negative mood states arising from unmet psychological needs, and Fyodorova et al. (2021) link emotional eating to body image disturbance and lower life satisfaction. Far from being a quirk or a weakness, Jemima's eating behavior reflects a pattern that appears with some regularity in the research literature on relational deprivation.

Her relationship with her mother adds another layer to this deprivation. Parental approval, when it comes, is conditional and fleeting. Even after Jemima manages to lose a

great deal of weight, a goal that has consumed her for years, her mother's response is not warmth but criticism:

"That's too thin for you, Jemima. You must look like a scarecrow." (Jemima J, p. 217).

Jemima's internal response to this, "I suddenly realize that, for whatever reason, I will somehow never be good enough for her" (Jemima J, p. 217), captures the logic of belonging deprivation at its starkest. No external achievement closes the gap, because what Jemima needs is unconditional acceptance, not performance-based approval. Matera et al. (2024) find that women who combine poor body appreciation with avoidant coping strategies tend to report worse psychological outcomes and reduced self-acceptance over time, a pattern that maps closely onto Jemima's experience. The implication for Maslow's hierarchy is also clear: without a stable foundation of love and belonging, the development of self-esteem at the next level becomes structurally precarious.

This dynamic is not unique to Jemima's story. Musthofa's (2018) analysis of the film *Lion* shows a protagonist whose prolonged search for love and belonging generates ongoing behavioral difficulties until relational needs are eventually, partially resolved. Nugroho et al. (2024) reach comparable conclusions in their reading of *The In Between* (2022), identifying the desire to be loved and to belong as the central motivational force governing the main character's decisions. The recurrence of this pattern across texts and media is itself an argument for the interpretive utility of Maslow's framework.

2. Romantic Longing and Deficiency Motivation

Jemima's feelings for Ben Williams, her colleague at the newspaper, offer one of the clearest illustrations of what Maslow called deficiency-motivated love—a form of attachment driven less by genuine affection than by the need to fill an emotional void. From early in the novel, her feelings are characterized by concealment, idealization, and a quiet but persistent sense of inadequacy:

"I pass the news reporters, all busy on the phone, my eyes cast downwards as I pass my secret heart-throb. Ben Williams is the deputy news editor. Tall, handsome, he is also the office Lothario." (Jemima J, p. 7)

The phrase "secret heart-throb" is telling. Jemima doesn't just admire Ben privately; she treats her feelings as something that must be hidden, as though expressing them would expose her to a rejection she already expects. This secretiveness is rooted in a belief, cultivated through years of belonging deprivation, that she is simply not the kind of person who gets to be loved. Maslow (1954) identified this pattern: individuals whose love needs go chronically unmet tend to develop a distorted self-image in which they come to see themselves as fundamentally undeserving of affection, a belief that reinforces itself over time.

The same logic shapes Jemima's habit of rehearsing romantic scenarios in her imagination that never has any chance of coming to pass:

"Jemima Jones never gets beyond that first kiss and the declaration of love. Occasionally the kiss takes place elsewhere, sometimes at the party, sometimes in the car, sometimes on the street, but his words are always the same, and, as far as Jemima's concerned, those words are the beginning of her happy ever after." (Jemima J, p. 62)

These daydreams are psychologically purposeful. When real belonging is out of reach, fantasy offers a version of satisfaction, impermanent and private, but satisfying enough to keep the need temporarily at bay. It is important to distinguish this from Freudian fantasy, in which unconscious wishes are projected outward without the subject's awareness. Jemima knows her daydreams are not real. What she experiences is a fully conscious longing for love that has no outlet, which is precisely what Maslow's deficiency motivation describes.

How unstable this deficiency-driven emotional state can be is visible in Jemima's reaction to seeing Ben with another woman:

"How can your moods change so suddenly? I mean, I was feeling so good, so happy, so optimistic, and now I'm rooted to the spot, trying hard to suppress a growing wave of nausea. It's Ben. The love of my life, and he's with a woman, and she's beautiful, and she's skinny, and I hate her, and I love him, I love him." (Jemima J, p. 74)

The speed of this collapse, from optimism to near-nausea, is characteristic of the emotional fragility Maslow associates with deficiency-motivated states. Zhou et al. (2024) provide empirical grounding: people who have a strong, unmet need to belong are particularly reactive to anything that reads as a threat to social connection, and their emotional responses tend to be disproportionate in intensity. The fact that Jemima's distress merges longing for

Ben with envy of the other woman's appearance also reveals something important, for Jemima, belonging and body image have become deeply entangled, a connection the novel develops throughout.

3. Social Acceptance and Compensatory Coping Behaviors

The need to belong does not stay confined to Jemima's romantic life. It also shapes how she conducts herself at work and at home. Because she cannot secure belonging through direct emotional connection, she develops a set of compensatory strategies. Making tea without being asked, and doing substantial editorial work for her colleague Geraldine without acknowledgment, is among the more revealing examples:

"Geraldine knows I can write, Geraldine wouldn't be anywhere if it weren't for me because whenever she has a deadline I'm the one she comes running to asking for help." (Jemima J, p. 26)

Read through Maslow's lens, Jemima's willingness to do unrewarded work is not generosity, it is a strategy for earning a place. She makes herself useful because usefulness feels, at least for a moment, like belonging. Maslow (1954) noted that people deprived of love and belonging sometimes adopt self-subordinating behaviors as a way of staying close to others, even when those relationships are one-sided or exploitative.

Her compulsive eating in moments of loneliness follows a related logic. Annesi (2023) identifies negative mood and body dissatisfaction as the main drivers of emotional eating in women, and notes that food becomes a regulatory tool when more direct forms of need satisfaction are not available. The passage below illustrates how this works for Jemima:

"Until last night, however, because lying on your bed feeling fat and miserable is inevitably the beginning of a binge, and last night, when Jemima had composed herself, she phoned the local pizza delivery company." (Jemima J, p. 80)

The eating here is systematic rather than occasional. Matera et al. (2024) make a useful distinction between maladaptive coping, which involves avoidance, and adaptive coping, which involves active engagement with the problem. Jemima's eating falls clearly into the first category, and the research literature consistently finds that avoidant coping is associated with poorer psychological outcomes. The novel thus puts a human face on what clinical studies have documented as a statistically recognizable pattern.

Her turn to internet dating reflects a different but related coping impulse:
"I bought this magazine this morning. Not my usual glossy fashion mag, I grant you, but one of the cover lines was about internet dating, and I'm just really curious about this, so I bought it and I'm learning all about internet cafés."
(Jemima J, p. 94)

This is not avoidance; it is active need-seeking behavior. Jemima is not retreating from the desire for connection; she is looking for an alternative path toward it. This fits Maslow's (1954) account of how deficiency needs generate sustained motivational pressure: they drive the individual toward any available source of potential satisfaction, even if that source is imperfect or roundabout.

4. The Brad Episode: Belonging Sought and Undermined

Jemima's relationship with Brad provides the novel's most extended study of what can go wrong when someone in a state of belonging deprivation enters a relationship that lacks genuine reciprocity. Initially, the experience of being with Brad registers as the fulfillment Jemima has been searching for:

"When he sits here and tells me he loves me, I try to push that feeling away, because no one's ever told me before that they loved me." (Jemima J, p. 350)

The way she suppresses her own misgivings in order to stay inside the feeling of being loved reveals the distorting power of deficiency motivation. Maslow (1954) argued that people in a state of acute need are less able to judge situations objectively, because the pull of the need overrides critical assessment. Nightingale and Cassin (2023) add an empirical dimension: women with higher levels of internalized weight bias and body dissatisfaction show reduced self-compassion and are more likely to remain in relationships that undermine their well-being. When it emerges that Brad was never genuinely interested in Jemima but was using her as a way of proving something to himself, the collapse of the relationship becomes a demonstration of why pseudo-belonging—connection that looks real but lacks mutuality, cannot satisfy the need it appears to address.

The arc bears comparison with what Lumbantoruan and Evyanto (2021) observe in their reading of Austen's *Persuasion*, where belonging similarly requires not just proximity to others but genuine mutual recognition. Hasan and Samsuri (2025) draw a comparable conclusion from a cross-cultural perspective, arguing that the complexity of belonging in literary fiction

tends to mirror the social and psychological conditions that constrain characters' relational possibilities. Both readings reinforce the point that satisfying love and belonging needs in any meaningful way demands authenticity, not just availability.

5. Resolution and the Satisfaction of Belonging Needs

The ending of the novel, Ben Williams publicly declaring his love for Jemima in a television interview, provides the narrative resolution that Jemima's belonging deprivation has been building toward. His words, "Her name's Jemima Jones" (Jemima J, p. 444), carry weight across several dimensions simultaneously: romantic recognition, public validation, and the specific acknowledgment of the one person whose regard has mattered most throughout the story.

From a Maslovian standpoint, this resolution does not mean that Jemima's belonging needs are now permanently and fully satisfied. What it does is address the most acute form of her deficiency, creating conditions in which growth at higher levels of the hierarchy becomes at least possible. Maslow (1954) understood the hierarchy as dynamic in precisely this way: needs are not extinguished by satisfaction but rather sufficiently addressed to release motivational energy for higher-order concerns. Matera et al. (2024) find that positive body appreciation combined with adaptive coping is associated with measurably improved psychological well-being and self-acceptance, an outcome that Jemima's trajectory, at the novel's close, seems to be moving toward, if not yet fully achieving.

Self-Defense of Jemima Jones

Schultz (2017) explains that Freud understood defense mechanisms as strategies the ego deploys to manage anxiety, typically operating outside conscious awareness, they buffer the individual against psychological pain that would otherwise be too difficult to bear. In Jemima's case, "self-defense" encompasses both this Freudian register and the need-driven coping behaviors that Maslow's deficiency motivation describes. Together, these two layers constitute the psychological strategies through which she protects herself from the pain of exclusion and unreturned feeling.

The earliest and most persistent of these strategies is the use of food as comfort:

"You don't need to know about my background, suffice to say that my childhood wasn't happy, that I never felt loved, that I never got over my parents' divorce as a young child, and that now, as an adult, the only time I feel really comforted is when I seek solace in food." (Jemima J, p. 2)

The passage tells us something important about how Jemima's relationship with food was formed. The association between eating and comfort was not chosen; it developed as a response to an environment that offered little in the way of emotional warmth. Food became reliable in a way that people had not been. This pattern, automatic, repetitive, activated by emotional distress, is consistent with what the literature on displacement and regression would predict.

Her compensatory behaviors in social settings work along similar lines. Making herself helpful, whether by brewing tea or ghostwriting Geraldine's copy, is a way of earning proximity to others. She cannot simply ask to be included, because she does not believe she has the kind of inherent value that would justify such a request. Instead, she manufactures value through service, hoping that usefulness will translate into acceptance. As the novel repeatedly shows, it generally does not.

Fantasy functions as a third layer of self-defense:

"Are we interested? Okay, let's take a peek into Jemima's daydreams. When Jemima Jones goes to bed and closes her eyes, this is what she sees: she sees herself struck down with gastroenteritis, a bad bout, not so bad as to be seriously threatening, but bad enough for her to lose huge amounts of weight." (Jemima J, p. 61)

The content of this fantasy is striking: Jemima imagines illness as a path to thinness, which she imagines as a path to love. It reveals, with uncomfortable clarity, how deeply she has internalized the idea that her body is the main obstacle between herself and belonging. Rather than questioning this premise, she retreats into a fantasy in which the obstacle is removed by forces outside her control, a response that shares features with Freudian regression, in that it involves a retreat from an unmanageable reality into a more manageable imagined one.

What ties these behaviors together, the eating, the self-effacing helpfulness, the daydreaming, is that each one serves the same underlying function: managing the pain of unmet love and belonging needs in the absence of a more direct route to satisfying them. They are not random or arbitrary. They are, in their own way, coherent responses to a psychological situation that Jemima has been living with for most of her life.

Conclusion

This study has examined the psychology of Jemima Jones in Jane Green's *Jemima J* by applying Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs, with sustained focus on the love and belonging level. Across the analysis, a consistent picture emerged: Jemima's compulsive eating, romantic fantasizing, compensatory social behavior, and pursuit of connection through internet dating are not isolated eccentricities but coherent expressions of what Maslow called deficiency motivation, arising from needs that have been chronically unmet. These findings align with current empirical research on emotional eating (Annesi, 2023; Fyodorova et al., 2021), body image coping (Matera et al., 2024), and the psychological consequences of belonging deprivation (Bruss et al., 2024; Zhou et al., 2024), confirming that humanistic psychology remains a productive framework for both literary analysis and contemporary psychological inquiry.

The study has also maintained a clear distinction between Maslow's humanistic framework and Freudian defense mechanisms. Though both illuminate aspects of Jemima's behavior, they rest on different theoretical foundations and should not be conflated. Maslow's model operates at the level of conscious motivational states and goal-directed behavior; Freud's mechanisms address unconscious, ego-protective responses. In practice, both are at work in Jemima's character, but the Maslovian lens is the primary one, given the novel's overriding preoccupation with the conscious pursuit of love and a sense of belonging.

Several directions remain open for future research. A more complete study might trace the full arc of Jemima's psychological development across all levels of Maslow's hierarchy, including her esteem needs and her tentative approach toward self-actualization. Feminist literary criticism, particularly in its postfeminist form, could also be brought to bear on the novel's status as a work of chick lit (Missler, 2021; Imelda et al., 2022), adding a dimension of

cultural analysis that the present study has not pursued. Even with these limitations in view, the study demonstrates that applying humanistic psychological theory to literary texts is a meaningful way to illuminate the emotional and motivational complexity of fictional characters—and, by extension, of the human experiences those characters are meant to reflect.

Jemima J is a richer novel than any single analytical framework can fully account for, and the researchers are aware that the present study represents one possible reading among many. The focus here has been on the love and belonging level of Maslow's hierarchy, which the researchers believe is the most productive entry point into Jemima's psychology, but future scholars might pursue other levels of the hierarchy, or bring entirely different theoretical lenses to the text. It is also hoped that this kind of psychological literary analysis can contribute to broader conversations about body image and the need for belonging, both of which tend to be treated as private or personal concerns despite having real social and psychological dimensions that deserve serious academic engagement. Researchers working in adjacent fields are encouraged to consider how humanistic or psychoanalytic frameworks might open up other novels in the chick lit tradition, or other contemporary fiction dealing with questions of identity, self-image, and the search for meaningful connection.

References

- Annesi, J. J. (2023). Emotional eating: Psychosocial bases, accordingly directed treatment design, and longitudinal effects in women with obesity. *Journal of Prevention*, 44(2), 221–237. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10935-023-00723-5>
- Bruss, K. V., Seth, P., & Zhao, G. (2024). Loneliness, lack of social and emotional support, and mental health issues—United States, 2022. *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report (MMWR)*, 73(24). <https://doi.org/10.15585/mmwr.mm7324a1>
- Dasmard, F., Razmjoo, T., & Salehi, V. (2012). The relationship between psychology and literature. *Journal of Basic and Applied Scientific Research*, 2(7), 6531–6538.
- Eppley, K. (2019). Close reading: What is reading for? *Curriculum Inquiry*, 49(4), 393–399. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03626784.2019.1631701>
- Fyodorova, E., Arina, G., & Nikolaeva, V. (2021). Emotional eating as a risk factor for body image and life satisfaction. *European Psychiatry*, 64(Suppl. 1). <https://doi.org/10.1192/j.eurpsy.2021.1221>

- Graham, N. (2014). Jane Green: Chick-lit author and property tycoon. *Financial Times*. Retrieved August 4, 2023.
- Green, J. (1998). *Jemima J*. Broadway Books.
- Grohol, J. M. (2017). Fifteen common defense mechanisms. *Psych Central*. <https://psychcentral.com/lib/15-common-defense-mechanisms/>
- Hasan, N., & Samsuri, A. (2025). Love and belonging across cultures: A comparative study. *Journal of Applied Linguistics and Literature*, 10(1). <https://doi.org/10.33369/joall.v10i1.37547>
- Imelda, R., et al. (2022). Aspects of chick-lit: A comparison between Western chick-lit and the Israeli chick-lit *The Song of the Siren*. *Journal of Modern Jewish Studies*, 21(1), 44–64. <https://doi.org/10.1080/25723618.2022.2043615>
- Kenrick, D. T., Griskevicius, V., Neuberg, S. L., & Schaller, M. (2010). Renovating the pyramid of needs: Contemporary extensions built upon ancient foundations. *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, 5(3), 292–314. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1745691610369469>
- Laarhoven, S. (2018). Social media, beauty standards, and Chinese women [Unpublished thesis].
- Lisbeth, K. (2003). Choice theory instructional module [Unpublished master's thesis]. Kent State University.
- Lumbantoruan, A., & Evyanto, W. (2021). Analysis of love and belonging needs in Jane Austen's *Persuasion*: A psychological approach. *Humaniora: Journal of Language and Literature*, 8(2), 45–57.
- Maslow, A. H. (1954). *Motivation and personality*. Harper & Row.
- Matera, C., Casati, C., Paradisi, M., Di Gesto, C., & Nerini, A. (2024). Positive body image and psychological wellbeing among women and men: The mediating role of body image coping strategies. *Behavioral Sciences*, 14(5), 378. <https://doi.org/10.3390/bs14050378>
- Mawere, M., Mubaya, T. R., van Reisen, M., & van Stam, G. (2016). Maslow's theory of human motivation and its deep roots in individualism: Interrogating Maslow's applicability in Africa. Scientific and Industrial Research and Development Centre.
- Missler, P. (2021). *The cultural politics of chick lit: Popular fiction, postfeminism and representation*. Routledge.
- Musthofa, M. W. (2018). Love and belonging needs analysis of Saroo as the main character in the film *Lion* [Undergraduate thesis, UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta].
- Nightingale, B. A., & Cassin, S. E. (2023). Self-compassion may have benefits for body image among women with a higher body mass index and internalized weight bias. *Healthcare*, 11(7), 970. <https://doi.org/10.3390/healthcare11070970>
- Nugroho, A., et al. (2024). The main character's hierarchy of needs in *The In Between* (2022). *Mahakarya: Journal of English Language and Literature*, 7(1).

- Safitri, H., & Purwani, W. A. (2022). Psychoanalysis approach in Jodi Picoult's *My Sister's Keeper*. *KARANGAN*, 4(2), 135–139.
- Sari, L., Natsir, M., & Valiantien, N. M. (2017). The hierarchy of needs reflected in Michael Oher's character in *The Blind Side* movie. *Jurnal Ilmu Budaya*, 1(4), 301–312.
- Schultz, D. P., & Schultz, S. E. (2017). *Theories of personality* (11th ed.). Cengage Learning.
- Taormina, R. J., & Gao, J. H. (2013). Maslow and the motivation hierarchy: Measuring satisfaction of the needs. *American Journal of Psychology*, 126(2), 155–177.
- Vandoren, K. E. V., & Kinnally, W. (2012). Media effects on body image: Examining media exposure in the broader context of internal and other social factors. *American Communication Journal*, 14(2), 41–57.
- Waltz, C. F., Strickland, O. L., & Lenz, E. R. (2010). *Measurement in nursing and health research*. Springer.
- Zhou, Z., Zhang, S., Kim, Y. K., Birditt, K. S., & Fingerman, K. L. (2024). Need to belong, daily social engagement, and transient loneliness in late life. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, 41(1). <https://doi.org/10.1177/02654075231211617>