

# THE PROCESS OF SELF-ACTUALIZATION THROUGH RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE IN JANE FENN HOSKENS' *LIFE*

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## ABSTRACT

This article proposes that Jane Fenn Hoskens (1694-1764) in her autobiography *The Life and Spiritual Sufferings of That Faithful Servant of Christ Jane Hoskens, A Public Preacher among the People Called Quakers (1771)* meets the criteria for Abraham Harold Maslow's theory of self-actualization. His theory is humanistic; it promotes man's psychological development including the constitution of a competent selfhood, a socially congruent persona and a blissful state of existence. Hoskens renders her need to actualize herself and achievement of it through her definition of herself on religious sphere; she depicts her spiritual crises and recurrent clashes of faith in the way to God. Her process of self-actualization requires this effort and through frequent 'peak experiences' her choice of Quakerism crystallizes in which she attains clear visions of her being and life in general. She finds preaching, writing and missionary activities as the tools for self-expression.

**Keywords:** Self-actualization, A.H.Maslow, Jane Fenn Hoskens, autobiography, religion, peak experience.

Koçsoy, F.Gül "Jane Fenn Hoskens'in *Life* Adlı Otobiyografisinde Dinsel Deneyim Yoluyla Kendini Gerçekleştirme Süreci". *idil* 6.36 (2017): 2171-2184.

Koçsoy, F. G.. (2017). Jane Fenn Hoskens'in *Life* Adlı Otobiyografisinde Dinsel Deneyim Yoluyla Kendini Gerçekleştirme Süreci. *idil*, 6 (36), s.2171-2184.

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# JANE FENN HOSKENS'İN LIFE ADLI OTOBİYOGRAFİSİNDE DİNSEL DENEYİM YOLUYLA KENDİNİ GERÇEKLEŞTİRME SÜRECİ

## ÖZ

Bu makale Jane Fenn Hoskens'in (1694-1764) *The Life and Spiritual Sufferings of That Faithful Servant of Christ Jane Hoskens, A Public Preacher among the People Called Quakers (1771)* adlı otobiyoğrafisinde Abraham Harold Maslow'un kendini gerçekleştirme kuramına ait ölçütleri karşıladığını ileri sürmektedir. Onun kuramı hümanistiktir; insanın yetkin bir kişilik, toplumsal anlamda uyumlu bir karakter ve mükemmel bir mutluluğa dayalı varlığının inşasını içeren psikolojik gelişimini destekler. Hoskens, kendini gerçekleştirme ihtiyacını ve dinsel alanda kendini tanımlayarak bunu başarmasını anlatır; Tanrı'ya giden yolda yaşadığı tinsel krizleri ve inancında tekrarlayan sarsıntıları betimler. Onun kendini gerçekleştirme süreci bu çabayı gerektirir ve sıkça yaşadığı 'doruk yaşantılar' ile Kuveykırızmi seçmesi somutlaşır; bunda kendi varlığına ve genel olarak yaşama dair net görüşler kazanır. Vaaz vermeyi, yazmayı ve misyonerlik faaliyetlerini kendini ifade etme araçları olarak tayin eder.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Kendini gerçekleştirme, A.H.Maslow, Jane Fenn Hoskens, otobiyoğrafî, din, doruk yaşantısı.

Self-actualization as a term of humanistic psychology means the need and desire to actualize one's full potential within environmental conditions into a blissful position in the spiritual sense. According to Abraham Harold Maslow (1908-1970), one of the pioneers of humanistic psychology, self-actualization realizes when a person can express himself completely and freely within his ideals in life. His theory includes the utmost development in mind and character of man, his accommodation into society and the society's approval of him. This means well-being; as Statt observes, it is "the ongoing striving to fulfil one's capacities that is a sign of psychological health" (Statt, 2003: 119).

Humanistic psychology has its roots in existentialist philosophy with which it shares the idea that man's will-power and potentials are substantive in his existence. Man's definition of himself on intellectual, spiritual and social bases is important for both existentialism and humanistic psychology. Maslow refuses the life-philosophies deprived of spiritual elements and ideals in life, and emphasizes the uniqueness of man, the integrity of self and self-improvement. In this vein, he bases his theory of self-actualization on the priority of individual experience and personality development. He claims that after the gratification of basic physiological needs, the needs of safety, love and belonging, and esteem come, though the scope of these four needs are not strictly fixed for each person. They must be satisfied on the level that the individual finds them sufficient. At this point, the need for self-actualization appears for man to achieve his full potential and ideals and to express them in psychological and social realms within his conditions to a satisfactory degree. This need or inner motivation emerges only when he knows his nature and potentials. For it is the state of psychological and mental health, if he cannot actualize himself he will be restless and unhappy all his life, even if the first four are complete.

For religion is a personal issue and is involved in the sphere of humanistic psychology, there is a close link between Maslow's theory which privileges man, and religious writings. His theory fits into Jane Fenn Hoskens' (1694-1764) autobiography *The Life and Spiritual Sufferings of That Faithful Servant of Christ Jane Hoskens, A Public Preacher among the People Called Quakers (1771)* on the psycho-social spheres. The work which is regarded as a conversion narrative and the first spiritual autobiography by a Quaker woman in America is a narrative of the process of individualization through religious experience. Life traces her gradual improvement from the state of psychological restlessness, sense of culpability and remorse into a state of tranquility sprung from divinity and into her choice of self-expression in religion, which enhances her personality and spiritual health. The pattern of conversion narrative is the "detailed descriptions of a sinful past, long and arduous struggle in the 'lost' condition, miraculous conversion - accompanied by praise to God

for his mercy - concluding with an account of the new life and ministry” (Barros and Smith, 2000: 27). In this context, the work depicts her spiritual evolution to actualize her ideal: to serve God and to gain His benevolence as the title suggests. It is a difficult emotional and spiritual completion process, demanding courage, stability and full devotion, and it realizes by her recognizing and understanding her true self.

Hoskens' Life as a spiritual autobiography centers on her private experiences in her religious life, development of spirit and the emergence of her authorial voice. She prefers writing an autobiography because it enables her to render the transmutation of her individual self in a religious process. For she is a social being, she feels it duty to share her experiences with other people by giving sermons, writing her autobiography and acting as a missionary. She writes her work with the idea that her evolution gains meaning when shared by other individuals in the world. On the other hand, Maslow's developmental theory and humanistic psychology in the broad sense comprises man's happiness in social terms, too. Both in humanistic psychology and in the genre of autobiography, the center of consciousness is the individual's; so it can be said that writing and evaluating an autobiography is an exercise of humanistic psychology. In addition, writing an autobiography is to share one's own self, experiences and ideals in a relatively chronological order. The focus of autobiography, and “autobiographical truth is not a fixed but an evolving content in an intricate process of self-discovery and self-creation,” (Eakin, 1985:3) exploring and unfolding of self and Hoskens' narrative can be evaluated within this approach. For its focus is her religious journey to self-actualization, it begins with a dream that she can actualize her inner voice: she determines to avoid from sins and follow God's way. Though it seems clear, she has some doubts about which way the right one is and how she will achieve this. It will be a hard trial and take time. In the work, her search for spiritual truth, her adoption of her aim, her efforts to realize them, her handicaps in compromising her spiritual and intellectual aspects, her coming through them, and developing herself as a preacher and becoming a role model are rendered within a process of autobiographical subjectivity and chronology.

Born in 1694 in England to Anglican parents, Hoskens witnesses the religious upheavals in 18th century England and America, characterized by the emergence of various sects and denominations and the struggle among them, notably between the Anglicans and the Puritans. As a young girl, she is not interested in such subjects, though. She often sings, but after a severe illness, she repents deeply, sinks into a spiritual crisis and senses a divine call that religion must become the center of her life and she must define her existence with the most transcendental being, God. Although she begins regarding every change as a sign or message coming from God, she cannot find familial solace and support for her delicate situation. There is not enough knowledge about her familial background in the text, but it can be deduced that she is

alone and not pleased with her conditions; so she embarks on a quest for self-actualization which is featured by her frequent witnessing of the existence of the gracious God in her heart. As a personal need and aim, she avows her intention to draw a path for herself apart from the morals given by her family with intense self-awareness and control of her fate. She sees her life out of the boundaries of established roles and authorizes herself.

With her former needs satisfied to the extent that she is pleased, she is urged by an inner voice to do something great and whole in life: expressing herself through religion. This voice is not only a voice but also a director leading her to surpass the boundaries of her family and society and to resolve her moral and spiritual conflicts before it takes her to the point where she sees their acclaim. When she enters the process of self-actualization with this call or inner impulse, she begins having some 'peak experiences', relevant to religious discourse, for deep religious feelings are also peak experiences. They can be identified with the inner insights and the signs of clarifications and affirmations of her status in the text. They are, for Maslow, the moments of 'intense happiness' in which an extensive quietude is experienced in the full. They are stripped of any attendant feelings of hatred, anger, or other egoistic feelings. He states: "Apparently the acute mystic or peak experience is a tremendous intensification of any of the experiences in which there is loss of self or transcendence of it,..." (Maslow, 1970a: 191). In such enjoyable sublime experiences, even if it is bitter for the self, it dissolves as a whole within a greater existence, surpassing the conflicts and the boundaries of time and space. The individual becomes sure of himself, moves away from all the pressures, fears and anxieties, and some special secrets of life are revealed for him. Maslow underlines the fact that both self-actualizing and self-actualized people have often peak experiences, but these are not through trivial encounters. While interpreting Maslow's idea of peak experiences, Schultz draws attention to the nature of the events that produce such things: "any experience of real excellence, of real perfection, of any moving toward the perfect justice or toward perfect values, tends to produce a peak experience" (Schultz, 1990: 331). For peak experiences are the signs of healthy psychology, the specific and precious values in life become clear for these people. Everybody can have such experiences but only in self-actualized people they leave permanent impact: balance and self-satisfaction in life.

The function of such special moments is the stimulation of the subject to make positive changes in his life, thus making them meaningful. For Hoskens, the first spiritual revelation or peak experience emerges when she is desperate about how she will find the right path to God: "if thou wilt be faithful, I will be with thee" (Hoskens, 2016:4). She senses this direct manifestation of God and His will, and deduces that

being faithful will be her guide. She feels urged to obey this statement. To surrender to a complete and gracious existence that she can feel respect and belonging, she becomes aware of the realities of life and her existence directly, and sees them objectively, gaining the freedom of willpower that is the first step to self-actualization. She becomes aware that her life is a gift and God appreciates her. Her sense of self and life become valuable for herself. With this arousal of self-respect, she begins building a new identity. On the other hand, her inner conflicts insist and she discloses: "But Oh, the weight and exercise I was under during this time of refinement, and the days and nights of godly sorrow and penitential mourning I underwent, are far beyond my ability to set forth in words; and once being alone I wept exceedingly" (9). With the fear of God and with the fear that the Satan deludes her, she oscillates between the belief that she is on the way to salvation and the belief that she is condemned, between the love of God and the tricks of Satan, causing anxiety and distress. She always waits for the way that God will open for her and mingles her will with that of God. Only through such manifestations, or such 'sufferings' in Hoskens' terms, a person can be regarded that he is in the right way for himself and for self-actualization.

When she resolves to go to America, as a young girl, because she sees that what she looks for is not in England, she confronts with family opposition, but her sense of duty to "bless the name of the Lord," (5) outweighs as the declaration of her resolution. She concentrates on that inner motivation of her life which is a difficult way, instead of staying with her family as a traditional girl and interprets future with hope and trust in her own terms. She knows that she can and will only express herself via religion and the love of God, though she does not know the way for the restoration of her soul.

In Philadelphia, for she first encounters hardships about accommodation and some legal problems, her socio-economic position as a young lonely woman leaves her unsure about her prospects for future. After meeting these first needs to her satisfaction, in Maslow's terms, with the aid of her will-power, she begins again pursuing her ideal. She is employed first as a schoolteacher and then as a housekeeper for a renowned Quaker David Lloyd, who is William Penn's lawyer and a famous politician who becomes her spiritual mentor. To her advantage, her social environment is composed of Lloyd's supportive Quaker group, and she lives with them for three years finding opportunity to witness their humanitarian way of life. She attends their meetings in her "infant state in religion" (13) and feels secure among them. She also feels belonging to them because of their sincere attitudes. One of the major theorists of the genre of autobiography, Georges Gusdorf claims in 1956 that "autobiography is not possible in a cultural landscape where consciousness of self does not, properly speaking, exist" (1980: 30) emphasizing its ontological value. Hoskens' life history fits into this definition: Quakers in general and her Quaker circle

form ‘a cultural landscape’ that enable her to attain the ‘consciousness of self’ and become aware that the growth of her personality is of utmost importance. Apart from protecting her from the hostility and the oppression of other denominations, they free her from striving for basic needs and become models for her.

Before surrendering to Quakerism and announcing her testimony, Hoskens starts perceiving its meaning system through which her evolution commences, and questions her own religion. Her only trial is with herself: she needs both intellectual and spiritual satisfaction. This phase is essential for her because after meeting her first three needs - physical, safety, and love/ belonging needs within the community, she has to construct her self-esteem, which is dependent on her concretizing her ideal on realistic, reasonable and spiritually satisfactory grounds, and to gain respect from others. For this, she needs time and more interaction with the community to understand the core and nature of their belief thoroughly and compare and contrast it with her parental religion. Their humanist cast of mind appeals to her profoundly: God is immanent, especially in people’s hearts. He does not exist only in sacraments and churches. Man can find the Truth through the “Inward Light” which exists in each person’s heart and manifests itself in isolation and silence while thinking God. Quaker belief that man is capable of forming bond with God without any other help from other people or institution is humanistic and it signals its existentialist aspect. The view of death is optimistic and the perception of God is based on ‘infinite goodness’. She is also impressed by the mystic character of Quakerism: Quakers wait for action until they are moved by the Holy Spirit and believe that they are guided by God. She sees Quakerism as enabling spiritual graces and allowing her to express her spirituality. Their activities and the applications of Quaker principles to actual life also attract her. Life is sacred and they cherish egalitarianism among men regardless of social class and gender that allows preaching by women and laymen; for example in New England, Pennsylvania, where Puritanism reigned, Quakers were democratic towards other denominations and woman gender that is a sharp contrast to Puritan hostility to other religious groups and scorn for women. Mays clarifies the social status of Quaker women at that time: “these women operated in a professional sphere of society not common among colonial women” (2004: 323) and they enjoy female equality in the church too, unlike the Puritan women. Their praxis for persuasion to render the heavenly truth includes no pressure, nor violence. They are pacifists and encourage charitable works though Puritans saw them deluded by Satan. Their approach to religion is not institutional but individual; this is what she prefers in choosing Quakerism as her religion.

Becoming a Quaker allows her to realize her spiritual purpose. She concludes that Quaker premises guide the right way to God, but waits for God's signal to convert or not and this signal comes with the emergence of a particular and a deeper love than before for the Quaker community: "Through the operation of divine goodness, great love was begotten in my heart to these people,..." (8) As she attends meetings, new horizons or peak experiences occur, arousing the sense of God's benevolence in her: "[a] fresh and large visitation of his heavenly love, and often tendered my spirit and begot strong desires after true and saving knowledge, and that the way of life and salvation might be clearly demonstrated..." (8). She is now happy and peaceful to find sound reasons to proselytize on spiritual and intellectual bases. Through worship in silence and listening to the voice of God, she acquires a vision, aided by the concept of the 'Inward Light' - Christ's presence in actual life - to discern evil and good, and recognizes, admires and appreciates grace when she encounters.

Although it is explicit that she has determined the course of her life and feels guilty for not being sure completely for such a long time that this is the right path, from time to time she still suffers from inner struggles in remorse because of her conversion which comes from her sense of insignificance for she has not gained her self-esteem yet. Her conversion to Quakerism often causes mental torment and conflicts within her soul; it disturbs her and hinders her acquisition of self-esteem. "Conversion narratives clearly make or imply strong standards of goodness and what constitutes human flourishing or detracts from it" (Hindmarsh, 2014:352). She again needs loneliness and time to appropriate Quakerism for herself. In addition, she has to start accomplishing her potentials. Her conversion is not a sudden one: it is the result of rigorous self-examination and careful study of Quaker creed; but it is necessary to get accustomed to the new faith which demands process. In Maslow's terms, it is possible to pass from one stage to another only when the former is gratified and settled completely. Becoming convinced of the doctrines of this sect and her nascent awareness, she enounces her vision: "...I again renewed my covenant with God, and promised obedience to his commands, and Oh! the calm, the peace, comfort, and satisfaction wherewith my mind was cloathed, like a child enjoying his fathers favour, and with inexpressible delight, beholding the smiles of his countenance" (9-10). More confident of her faith, she surrenders both spiritually and intellectually to Quaker belief with complete obedience and devotion. She evaluates past mistakes in a constructive way, not feeling regret this time. She prudently accepts her feeling distance to Quakerism and her failure in not resolving her instability about Quakerism. She sees her deferral of accepting Quakerism as a positive function in gaining her present state.

Her suffering from adapting herself to the new faith leads her to worship in silence alone, expecting the voice of God. She feels obliged to wait for the emergence



of divine inspirations or peak experiences and allows herself to hear and listen to God's willpower in her own soul. Maslow stresses the awareness of individuality in attaining self-esteem and self-actualization. Hoskens has always been deeply involved in her existence, place and future in the world; in gaining her self-esteem, she sees her positive and negative sides and craves for a better state of individuality now. Her individuality on religious grounds is supported by a revelation of God or a peak experience: "I have chosen thee a vessel from thy youth to serve me, and to preach the gospel of salvation to many people; and if thou wilt be faithful, I will be with thee unto the end of time, and make thee an heir of my kingdom" (10). This manifestation signals God's nomination of her in preaching and she becomes missioned to give her testimony publicly. She is shocked by this message for she finds herself incapable of preaching. She is in anguish until a friend tells the same message of her own sent by God that she should begin preaching. According to Quaker belief system, after the confirmation of a woman's belief, her friends should encourage her to speak out. They believe that God speaks through her. After all, it takes six months for her to determine to obey this revelation, not only with her mind but with her soul and her first speech realizes again through a peak experience or a direct communication with God: "this may be the last offer of this kind thou wilt be favoured with, embrace it, I will be thy strength and exceeding great reward." I then said, "Lord I will submit, be thou with me, and take away the fear of man, thou shalt have my whole heart" (12). She utters the 'given' words improvisationally and with enjoyment; she becomes motivated to tell the story of her conversion and to preach with complete devotion. In the beginning, she is uncertain about God's choice of her, but she feels honored to be a minister when she is affected by her first preach and hears positive feedback and acclaim from her friends. Her social environment also exhorts her for preaching and is eager to hear her experiences. When she becomes a public speaker and becomes one with her audience, she begins sensing her personal potentials and believing in herself. Religion and her actual life become the same; she recognizes herself with her limits as a woman and as a person before God and only when with the transcendental existence - with God - she can recognize her true self. She gains her self-esteem as her articulation refines and her voice and identity in life flourishes powerfully. She gains respect for herself when she becomes a remarkable public figure. She delivers sermons and travels for the enlightenment of people in excitement and enjoyment.

According to Maslow, only through peak experiences, a person can be sure that he is in the right way for himself. For Hoskens, peak experiences imply the approval of God and unification with Him, because she, as a Quaker sees everything as a message, through which the specific and precious values in life become clear for her. She sometimes has the illusion that she pretends or becomes proud of herself while giving sermons. She has the idea that God has not accepted her service, and becomes

dismayed. In fact, she needs to experience these critical moments to crystallize her situation and overcome lack of confidence. Consolation comes that God will always be with her; with the trust in God, she again overcomes these diversions:

“...be encouraged, thou art suffered to pass through these trying dispensations, not only on thy own account, but for the sake of others to whom, when qualified, I will, in my own time, send the faithful; I will be with thee to the end of time: at his intimation I was tendered and filled with gratitude unto his divine Majesty, who alone can deliver his children out of their afflictions; and my soul at this time, under a sweet sense of his goodness, bows with awful reverence and with praises to his holy name, and says who is like unto our God” (15).

Her self-confidence and self-assertion increase as her social integration with society improves. On the other hand, she feels a contradiction between her social status and the act of preaching, but another peak experience inspired from God persuades her:

“...be still, I will make way for thee in their hearts, they shall seek to thee: I knew not what to think of this, and was afraid it might be a temptation of satan; yet rested contented in the thought that the Lord who never yet failed, was all sufficient to provide for me: At that instant a great stillness came over me, and I felt the love of my heavenly father to affect me...” (16-17).

She mingles her will solidly with that of God. She is now completely sure that her road is the right one approved by God. She becomes a ‘captive maid’, a faithful servant to God, without any feeling of insignificance for she is of lower rank. Her lenient attitude toward people is in fact a sign of grace given by the Providence; she is greatly admired as an influential and active preacher and liked by the community which makes her happy and self-satisfied both on psychological and social grounds. She also overcomes the confusions of Satan which defers her achievement of self-esteem: “...by virtue of the word preached, the Lord would still continue his wanted favours to me, in preserving me from the snares of the wicked one” (17).

She receives the call, implying God’s approval:

...for now I began frequently to speak in meetings, and many eyes were upon me, I was become like a city on an hill which could not be hid: and Christ our Lord speaking of this situation, says, ‘Let your light so shine, as that others beholding your good works, may glorify your Father which is in heaven,...’ (22-23)

Even at meetings, she experiences divine manifestations “through poor weak instruments” (28), she states humbly. As she recovers from uncertainty, the conflicts

in her soul are eliminated, but this hardly constitutes a new personality, because other ways of self-expression is essential. After this gradual and arduous passage to make her life meaningful, she needs to develop her personality with doing more extensive social service in religious terms. This will be another way of self-expression and her spiritual journey continues towards self-actualization. She reflects about rendering her conversion experience to other people apart from her own community. If she can speak, she will speak for the name of God. Her sureness about the divine origin of this intent empowers her to travel for missionary work. Besides, it is essential for Quakerism: it is the re-enactment of the Quaker belief that she is 'a living testimony', joining the Light. She becomes a sincere participant of the cultural affairs of Quaker community by becoming an itinerant preacher, and an individual remarkable public figure notably giving sermons both in America and abroad. She retains her new identity although the travels are sometimes stringent. She is encouraged as usual by the Almighty and is surrendered to what He prepares for her:

...the good hand, though often concealed, was near under all, and he did enable me at times to speak to the conditions of the people, so that the witness was reached, and by his own almighty power the seed raised and brought into dominion; of this, time hath brought undeniable proofs, so that though this was a painful journey both to body and mind, yet as the infinitely wise being was pleased to bless it to some, to the honour of his own great name, I dare not repine, but hope humbly to submit to what he hath permitted or may permit to attend for the refining of my faith, and making it more pure than gold." (28)

Quaker circles have direct positive influence on Hoskens' pursuit of self-actualization, too. With their invaluable support, she is ready to satisfy her most important spiritual necessity. She takes examples from virtuous people and bears the pains coming with her faith. Time and her sincere belief that Quakerism is the expression of her existence remedy her troubles. She is now ready to exhibit her full potential to herself and to other people. Schultz signifies: "Even though all four of the previous needs may be satisfied, the person who is not self-actualizing, not utilizing his or her potential, will be discontented and restless. The individual will be frustrated, as one would be at the failure to satisfy any other need." (1990: 325). To satisfy her need for self-actualization, she does not content herself only with preaching. She yearns for another kind of expression apart from preaching that could enhance her for the complete fulfillment of life in terms of social life and decides to write her self-history not only for herself but also for other people: "A Concern having for some considerable time remained on my mind to commemorate the tender dealings of a merciful GOD, in visiting my soul, in the days of my youth; I have therefore endeavoured briefly to set forth the same in the following lines." (3) With her philosophy of life rooted in Quaker principles and the belief that the Inward Light

guides her to speak and do missionary work, she feels inspired to write. Desire of chronicling means for her the act of recollection and transmission of her extension towards the future, infinity and future generations which emerges as her inevitable urge at the level of self-actualization. To chronicle the story of her life especially her religious experience will give her the possibility to express herself to her own existence and to others. It will authenticate her selfhood and will also serve as the proof of the conscious recognition of her individual identity and personality in a fulfilling life.

As a Quaker with her newly constructed self, Hoskens knows “the power of the printed word to document, preach, and inspire the community to continue their unorthodox worship in the face of adversity” (Lelos, 2009: 1). She assigns meaning to her self-representation as her fulfilling her aim of service for the Quaker Friends and all humanity. She feels the responsibility for people to lead them to God’s way. She wants to make her own story meaningful, open to others. She finds Intersection of private and public life in speaking, doing missionary work and writing. With her newly constructed self, and having found her authorial voice, she writes her autobiography first to face and comprehend her evolution of self and to be a role model for people: she means that with her lamentations and admonitions, if *she*, a lonely poor woman is able to reach this position, everybody can, as long as they listen to their truthful inner voices and be motivated all the time.

A self-actualized person now, having experienced a painful but necessary process, with her abilities exhibited completely, she begins enjoying her life to the full extent. Maslow’s words verbalize her happiness: “...peak-experiences are one part of the operational definition of the statement that ‘life is worthwhile’ or ‘life is meaningful’” (Maslow, 1970b). Her life gains meaning and she develops many positive personality traits and virtues that all self-actualized people share like prudence, tranquility and magnanimity. She becomes mature and full of love towards life. She embraces it as it is and becomes spiritually powerful. She wishes the same blessing for everybody and the sense of sharing permeates her: “I cannot help but desire that people in every condition in this world may be thus blessed when the soul is tendered with the love of God...” (15), wishing for everybody to experience fulfillment by religion. This does not mean that she will not criticize herself, though she is an example to follow.

Hoskens’ process of self-actualization, like all self-actualizations, has not been easy. Apart from the psychological sufferings and struggles, it takes a great deal of time. Her journey begins at the age of nineteen making her grow mature until her death at the age of seventy. It is the story of individualization and social integration resulted in self-satisfaction, but it has universalizability, too. This process is the

reassurance of her personal needs and the expression of her abilities. It is also the process of her psychological restoration, to face her inner problems and conflicts and to think on them to analyze and find solutions for them; she finds a common denominator between Quaker faith and her desire to speak, do missionary work and write and share her experiences to glorify God, meeting her need to confess her conversion, spiritual transformation and the exploration in the self.

While trying to analyze her ultimate true self, Hoskens recognizes that she is alone and limited in front of God; only merging with the power of God, especially and intensely in the moments of peak experiences, she can merge her desires into one. The accomplishment of the unity of man and God means the accomplishment of self-actualization for her, which is characterized by the metaphysical understanding of religion and meaningful existence. She defines herself as a complete individual and a public woman, speaking, writing and travelling for religion and will be at peace with herself and with her social environment. She awakens to awareness about life through a revelation from God: “by sore afflictions we learn experience, and if we make a proper use thereof, all will in due time be sanctified to us, so that we shall receive the word of instruction with joy” (31). She acquires the vision that life can have difficulties but it carries beautiful outcomes in itself, too.

As Maslow specifies, “the transcending peakers are more apt to write the poetry, the music, the philosophies, and the religions” (Maslow, 1970a:191). Hoskens’ peak experiences are the proofs of the fact that her religious and actual lives have been integrated. Having found her true self within the frame of religion and satisfying her supreme need to actualize herself both on individual and social levels Hoskens stands as a rare kind of woman in Colonial times, who can negotiate the needs of self and the priorities of society on a reasonable base. She meets the criteria of self-actualization, and *Life* merits a significant place in spiritual autobiography tradition in American literature uniquely: it a success story through spirituality.

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**Note:** I would like to thank Prof. Dr. Mukadder Erkan for her encouragement and support for the formation of this article.

**Note:** This article is the extended version of the paper "The Process of Self-actualization through the Idealization of Religious Experience in Jane Fenn Hoskens' Life" at the ASOS Congress: 1<sup>st</sup> International Symposium on Social Sciences, held by Firat University on 13-15 October, 2016 in Elazig, Turkey.