

# ABRAHAM MASLOW'S HIERARCHY OF NEEDS THROUGH THE MAIN CHARACTER IN ANDY WEIR'S *THE MARTIAN*

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## **Abstract**

This study is entitled Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy Of Needs Through The Main Character In Andy Weir's *The Martian*. The objectives of this study are to analyze Mark Watney's needs while he gets stuck on Mars and the ways he chooses to fulfill his needs. The approach used is psychological approach because human needs and the fulfillment of needs relate to psychological problem. In completing this study, the researcher uses descriptive qualitative method to remain focused on the data and interpretation. The researcher uses Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs to prove the needs of Mark Watney. This theory explains that there are five stages of the needs of every human being, such as physiological needs, safety needs, love and belongingness needs, esteem needs, and self-actualization needs. As the result, it is found that Mark Watney has all five stages of Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs and he manages to fulfill each of these needs one by one.

*Keyword: The Martian, Hierarchy of Needs, Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs.*

## **INTRODUCTION**

Humans as living beings cannot be separated from their social relationships, they are closely related to relationships between humans and other living things in society. Humans cannot live alone to get their daily needs, therefore they need other people. In order to get something they need, humans have to make efforts so that what they need can be obtained, one of them is social interaction. According to Braun, Linder, & Asimov (Psychology Today: 1979), in people's life there are many life events happening. For every life events will make people to force themselves to make some struggles in their life. Whereas people attempt to bargain with all these problems and challenges of life, they will have to be compelled to adjust their selves. Struggle can be deciphered as a person's technique to secure him from problems in life. According to Bernard (1980: 481), in some condition people have rationally and consciously implement strategies which enable them to survive toward stresses or problems of life. When they try to face problems, they usually will seek for some strategies or ideas to survive toward their problems.

Every effort made, certainly cannot be separated from needs, one of which is the need to live. Humans basically can not be separated from every need. According to Maslow (1943), everyone has different needs, and these are divided into five categories of needs, such as physiological needs, safety needs, love and belongingness needs, esteem needs, and self-actualization needs. The five categories have different standards of fulfillment in each person, so everything will be different from one to another person.

In this study, the researcher uses a psychological approach to examine more deeply about the needs of the main character, Mark Watney, in the novel *The Martian* by Andy Weir. The researcher chose this novel because it is very interesting when looking at the needs of Mark Watney while living on Mars, when he was thought to have died and was left by his fellow crew members. This study also examines the problems faced by the main character while living on Mars and how he can survive until his pickup to return to Earth safely by using Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs.

## **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

There has been studies on this topic, such as by Chindy Hadi Prastiti (2019) entitled *Mark Watney's Survival on Mars in the Novel The Martian by Andy Weir* that is examined how Mark Watney can survive on Mars; and Nuri Tri Jayanti (2019), *Wen's Struggle to Fulfill Her Needs in Xinran's Sky Burial* that is focused on Wen's struggle to fulfill her safety and security needs, and love and belongingness needs. Based on previous studies, this study has similarities and differences. The similarities are the object and the theory used. The object used in the first study is the same with this study which is taken from *The Martian* novel. And the theory used in the second study is the same with this study, which is hierarchy of needs by Abraham Maslow. Meanwhile, the difference between this study and the previous study is that this study combines the two studies above, which is examining the needs of the main character and the ways to fulfill it from the novel *The Martian*.

This study uses Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs. It is motivational theory in psychology comprising a five-tier model of human needs, from the bottom to the upwards, the needs are: physiological needs, safety needs, love and belongingness needs, esteem needs, and self-actualization needs. Needs lower down in the hierarchy must be satisfied before individuals can attend to needs higher up. Maslow (1943) stated that people are motivated to achieve certain needs and that some needs take precedence over others. Our most basic need is for physical survival, and this will be the first thing that motivates our behavior. Once that level is fulfilled the next level up is what motivates us, and so on.

## **METHOD**

In this study, the researcher uses descriptive-qualitative method as the methodology. It is utilized to depict the data that are descriptive in nature. It is helpful for the researcher

to remain focused on the data and interpretation. The researcher uses literary criticism to discover every aspect that is found in the data. It is utilized to analyze and portray the data of this research logically because this research is focused on the statement of the study. The source of the data in this research is the novel entitled *The Martian* written by Andy Weir. It was published in 2011 and it contains 399 pages. The data taken from the novel are in the form of words, sentences, dialogues, and quotation.

## **FINDING AND DISCUSSION**

This chapter contains the analysis of Mark Watney's needs when he lives on Mars. The analysis is divided into two sub-chapter. The first sub-subchapter is analyze about Mark Watney's needs when he lives on Mars. The second sub-chapter is analyze about Mark Watney's way to fulfill his needs.

### **A. Mark Watney's Needs When He Lives on Mars**

#### **1. Physiological Needs**

Physiological needs are the primary things for humans to survive, such as food, clothing, and shelter. In this case, Mark Watney desperately needs food to survive, clothes to protect himself, and a place to live as a shelter, as the safest place from all threats that may occur at any time, including the weather on Mars. There is no other threat than the weather on Mars because there are no other living things that live there besides Mark Watney. For food, at least Mark Watney needs supplies for 3 years because he must survive at least 3 years until the Ares 4 mission is carried out and he can come back to earth. He said, "Start to finish, including supply missions, a Mars mission takes about 3 years." (Weir, 2011: 3).

"The surface mission was supposed to be 31 days. For redundancy, the supplies probes had enough food to last the whole crew 56 days...We were six days in when all hell broke loose, so that leaves enough food to feed six people for 50 days. I'm just one guy, so it'll last me 300 days." (Weir, 2011: 9)

The quotation above explain that each Ares mission to Mars takes about 3 years. That means if at that time Mark Watney is left on Mars, at least he has to survive for 3 years to be able to return to Earth with the Ares 4 crew. With the available food supplies, at least he can survive about 300 days by adopting a diet that must be saved to minimize the possibility of bad things happening to him. Seeing this, Mark Watney is still confused because 300 days is not enough to wait until the Ares 4 crew arrives on Mars. So, he reconsiders the food supplies he has and finally he finds the results that his food could be enough to fulfill his food needs for 400 days and he also calculates the number of calories he needs every day to keep him active.

#### **2. Safety Needs**

Safety needs are the second from physiological needs. This need primarily refers to the need for security. If we look at Mark Watney's position, at that time of course he really

needs peace and security. This is none other than because Mars has extreme temperatures, low oxygen levels, extreme weather that can change at any time without being predictable, and the main problem is because Mars is an uninhabited planet. Mark Watney, as an astronaut trusted by Nasa, is fully equipped and facilitated, such as the Hab as a place to live and the Mars Descent Vehicle as a vehicle that can be driven to explore the area around Mars, but the problem is that he only lives alone, without friends, without connections for communication. This is certainly very dangerous for his psyche.

Mark Watney has difficulty communicating with the team due to a weak signal, which prevented him from communicating with the rest of the crew on Earth. From that, we can see that Mark Watney feels he has to fend for himself because no one knows that he is still alive. Even if he tried to contact the rest of the crew but if the signal is weak, then it is impossible to do. As a human being, experiencing something like this will certainly make Mark Watney feel frustrated because no one knows his whereabouts and circumstances. Therefore, the researcher find that Mark Watney feels that he needs for security, both for himself physically and mentally.

### **3. Love and Belongingness Needs**

Love and belongingness refers to the need for affection. With Mark Watney being alone on Mars, of course he really needs love, both from his family, friends, and from his own team. But unfortunately, Mark Watney feels that no one cares about him because he is left alone and considered dead when a storm hit Mars. “Maybe there’ll be a day of national mourning for me, and my Wikipedia page will say “Mark Watney is the only human being to have died on Mars”.” (Weir, 2011: 1). It can be seen that Mark Watney feels that no one cares about him, and he feels that he is alone. He feels that his name would be remembered in the world as the only person in the world who died on Mars, without any additional food supply or pickup to return home because everyone thought that he had died in the great storm of Mars. Seeing Mark Watney’s condition, the researcher finds that Mark Watney is depressed at the beginning of his stay on Mars. He feels that he will die slowly because he knows that Mars is a planet that is not yet suitable for humans to inhabit.

Mark Wattney is depressed. Seeing everything that has happened to Mark Watney, it can be concluded that he is depressed because of several things, such as the same routine every day, living a seemingly aimless life, feeling that no one cares for him, including the NASA crew on Earth who did not try to contact him, and most importantly Mark Watney do not feel affection. Affection can not only be interpreted as love from the closest people such as family, even more than that, affection can also be obtained from a team that fights together. Like the Ares 3 team that is then intact, they works together and loves each other because they works as a team for the same goal on the same mission. It can be seen from the items in the Hab brought by commander Lewis, one of which is a TV. Commander Lewis brings the item to share when they are bored at the Hab, and it is a form of a commander's concern for the crew on duty.

#### **4. Esteem Needs**

Esteem needs refers to the appreciation of each person. In this case, Mark Watney needs esteem as his encouragement to live. He feels the need for esteem because he is fighting for a very noble and very big task for the company and the country. With NASA not aware of his whereabouts, Mark Wattney feels that there is absolutely no credit for him. He feels that NASA is not looking for his whereabouts and leave him to die alone on another uninhabited planet. He also feel that NASA do not try to contact him because NASA thought that Mark Watney has died in the big storm that is hitting Mars, especially at Acidalia Planitia, where Mark Watney and his team landed on a mission. He says, “For the record... I didn’t die on Sol 6. Certainly the rest of crew thought I did, and I can’t blame them.” (Weir, 2011: 1). This quotation reveals that Mark Watney has been abandoned by his teammates. He feels that it is a big mistake, but he could not blame them.

“Ares 3. Well. That was my mission. Well, not mine per se. Commander Lewis was in charge. I was just one of her crew. Actually, I was the very lowest ranked member of the crew. I would only be “in command” of the mission if I were the only remaining person. What do you know? I’m in command.” ( Weir, 2011: 1)

From the quotation above, it can be seen that Mark Watney feels that he is the lowest ranked member of the crew. Psychologically, he feels that his position is very low compared to the rest of the crew. That is the reason why he feels he is not valued in the team. He feels that he is very backward regarding the mission they are carrying out because he is only a botanist, not real science. Therefore, the researcher assumes that Mark Watney needs esteem, both from his teammates, and from NASA, the company where he works. He felt that he was also one of the crew that had to be saved. Regardless of his position as a botanist and occupied the lowest rank in the team. This is no longer a matter of rank or duty in the mission, but about saving a human who has contributes greatly to the company and the country in the context of developing research carried out. There should be no more thinking about titles, duties, and so on, but NASA must think from a human perspective. Mark Watney spends more time on missions than on family, which is why NASA have to save Mark Watney. But besides that, there is a huge cost that NASA has to pay to pick up Mark Watney on Mars.

#### **5. Self-actualization Needs**

With Mark Watney is trapped on Mars, he feels that he will die and before the mission is over. In fact, the inclusion of Mark Watney in the mission is to assume the role of engineer and botanist. As an engineer, he can carry out the necessary repairs for the smooth running of the team in carrying out the mission. As a botanist, in fact he is not needed at all because in their mission, there is no task for planting or other activities related to botany. Therefore, he feels that he could not do self-improvement. As the crew with the lowest rank compared to the others, he often feels insecure about himself.

Mark Watney is proud that his friends have saved themselves and avoids the storm, it means that it is very likely that the remaining crew will return to Earth safely. From the words spoken by Mark Watney, there is an implied message that he feels proud because the survivors are people who are ranked higher than him. He thought that NASA would appreciate the surviving team because they could save themselves from a very dangerous situation. In addition, Mark Watney also feels that he will not be picked up by the NASA crew on Earth because it will cost a lot of money just for people who are not very important like him.

## **B. Mark Watney's Way to Fulfill His Needs**

### **1. Fulfillment of Physiological Needs**

When Mark Watney is stuck on Mars, he has some needs, which include primary needs such as food, clothing, and shelter. At that time Mark Watney experiences a shortage of food because the food supply is only sufficient for 400 days, and even then he has to go on a diet where every day he has to cut 500 calories, from 1500 calories to 1000 calories. This of course will not be able to meet Mark Watney's food needs because the Ares 4 crew will only arrive on Mars 3 years later. This makes Mark Watney has to think harder to make his own food ingredients. An intelligent and creative botanist, he has the idea of growing potatoes there. His goal is to increase his food stock so he can get more so he can survive longer and even until the Ares 4 crew gets to Mars.

The food problem can be solved by Mark Wattney. But then he makes another mistake which makes Hab explode, destroying all the potato plants and the clothes he is wearing. For the matter of clothes, he then wears the clothes of Martinez, his teammate. He is wearing his friend's astronaut suit that is in the wardrobe. And for the destroyed Hab, he replaces the Hab's door using used plastic which he then seals using insulation so that the temperature and air inside the Hab returned to normal. Even though everything is back to normal, Mark Watney still feels worry because the door he closed using plastic would not last very strong, especially if there is a big storm hit. It is helpful to save Mark at the time, but in the long run, it would be very dangerous.

### **2. Fulfillment of Safety Needs**

Seeing the conditions of Mars that are very different from Earth, Mark Watney has a need for security. The only way to keep him safe is to live in a Hab that is specially designed to match conditions on Earth. With food, clothing, and shelter available, it is not enough for Mark Watney to feel safe because there are still many things to watch out for on Mars, one of which is unpredictable extreme weather and large storms that can arrive in a short time to certain locations. Therefore, Mark Watney tries to keep contacting the NASA crew who are on Earth to save him. But doing that is not easy, he has a signal interference that is not connected so he can not contact the rest of the NASA crew. This do not deter Mark Watney's determination to contact his partner on Earth, he keep trying.

Mark Watney finds a Pathfinder that could help him communicate with the crew on Earth. Pathfinder will send a signal and NASA Crew on Earth will be easy to find the position he is and can be directly connected. From this, we can see that success cannot be achieved easily. Sometimes the way we think is right is not the best way. Even ways that we do not expect before can be the best way to solve problems that occur. The message that we can take is, as humans we can only find ways that we can take to solve existing problems, but the best decision remains in the hands of God.

### **3. Fulfillment of Love and Belongingness Needs**

Fighting alone on another planet is certainly a very hard thing. No other life, no friends, not even family. In that situation Mark Watney can only surrender to God. He just asked at least to be able to communicate with the rest of the crew on Earth. Like he said, “Jesus Christ, I’d give anything for a five-minute conversation with anyone. Anyone, anywhere. About anything. I’m the first person to be alone on an entire.” (Weir, 2011: 117). From this quotation we can see that Mark Watney leaves everything to God, he asks God to communicate with anyone, anywhere, about whatever he wants to say. In this case, the researcher conclude that Mark Watney is very depressed because there is no communication with anyone. Like someone lecturing in an empty field, that is how Mark Watney felt.

“Mark, this is Venkat Kapoor. We’ve been watching you since Sol 49. The whole world’s been rooting for you. Amazing job, getting Pathfinder. We’re working on rescue plans. JPL is adjusting Ares 4’s MDV to do a short overland flight. They’ll pick you up, then take you with them to Schiaparelli. We’re putting together a supply mission to keep you fed till Ares 4 arrives.” (Weir, 2011: 138-139)

The quotation above shows the concern of the NASA crew on Earth towards one of their best astronauts. From the words sent by Venkat Kapoor via live chat it shows that NASA do not want to lose their best astronaut. Apart from being a form of concern for Mark Watney's safety, the message also indicates that NASA really cares about their astronauts. NASA is not going to let its astronauts die silly starvation and fright on another planet. Being able to communicate with the crew on Earth makes Mark Watney very happy, especially when he can communicate with his teammates who traveled to Mars together.

### **4. Fulfillment of Esteem Needs**

Referring to the previous explanation that Mark Watney feels he is not appreciated is wrong. In fact, he is highly valued, both by his teammates and by NASA as the company he works for. Mark Watney is actually a hero to the team because he is the only one who mastered all the engineering parts in the mission. Although he feels that he is not appreciated, he feels that he will be remembered forever by the people on Earth.

NASA's crew on Earth cares about Mark Watney so much that they go the extra mile to take pictures and research whether Mark Watney is still alive. With this fact, the

researcher concludes that actually Mark Watney is highly valued because he is one of the best crews that NASA have. And given that the Ares mission is a huge and very important mission, NASA could not have chosen just anyone to be on the crew. As such, Mark Watney is one of the best people in NASA and his country.

## **5. Fulfillment of Self-actualization Needs**

Seeing the problems that have occurred, and Mark Watney is feeling he would die slowly on Mars without being picked up by the rest of the NASA crew, he feels that his skills would be in vain because he would face his death which might not be long. But that thinking is a big mistake. Finally Mark Watney thinks harder to survive. Mark Watney is finally able to think and who at first feels hopeless to live became inspired again to survive in a difficult situation. In this case, it can be seen that Mark Watney is motivated to survive because he is aware of the Ares 4 mission which all the crew would arrive 3 years later, therefore Mark Watney finally decides to try to survive and fulfill his food needs by trying to use his skills as a botanist to plant potatoes on Mars.

Mark Watney uses his intelligence in mathematics to calculate the amount of space he needs and the available space, he also calculates the distance of each potato plant he will plant. In this case, it can be seen that Mark Watney is very serious about surviving at least until the Ares 4 team arrives at Schiaparelli Crater. To plant potatoes, Mark Watney still has difficulty growing them, that is he does not have enough water to water his plants. However, with his intelligence, he decides to create his own water.

## **CONCLUSION**

After analyzing the novel *The Martian*, there are several things that can be concluded. First and foremost, the main character dominates in this novel. It tells about the needs that are needed when Mark Watney, the main character is getting stuck on Mars and the ways he fulfills his needs. In living life, every human being certainly has their own needs, and they all have different ways of fulfilling each other in the process. Some people will choose to simplify all things related to their needs, some others there are who give up on the situation and there are even those who do not strive at all to meet these needs. Everything certainly has its own consequences, and when we decide to choose a path, then we must be prepared with all the consequences. Including one of them is the struggle of life to meet all existing needs. However, in this novel, Mark Watney chooses to struggle to fulfill his needs. Although at first he has doubts about all the possibilities, but with his tenacity and intelligence, he is finally able to survive by fulfilling all his needs. In addition, he is also able to show the world that nothing is impossible if we keep trying.

In the novel, Mark Watney has needs that all fulfill Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, such as physiological needs, safety needs, love and belongingness needs, esteem needs, and self-actualization needs. Although at first Mark Watney has difficulties, but in the end he is able to fulfill all his needs one by one thanks to his persistence. The lesson

we can take from the novel is to keep fighting under any circumstances, because no matter how difficult the problem is, when we know that God is with us, everything will pass well.

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