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Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs as Depicted by The Main Character in The Film The Whale (2022)

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ABSTRACT

This study discusses the hierarchy of needs found in the main characters in Darren Aronofsky's film The Whale (2022). The hierarchy of needs was first proposed by Abraham Maslow in 1943 and is included in his humanistic theory of motivation. In this study, the author analyzes how Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs is applied to the main characters in the film. The theory used in this study is the humanistic theory of motivation, which includes the hierarchy of needs for analyzing data. This study also formulates the problem of how the main character fulfills his needs. The results of this study show that there are several needs that have not been fulfilled by the main character. However, the results of this study reveal the methods and actions taken by the main character in fulfilling his needs.

Keyword : Film Analysis, Hierarchy of Needs, Abraham Maslow

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INTRODUCTION

Film is a type of literary work in the form of audiovisual media. According to Klarer (as cited in Narudin, 2017), film is classified as a type of literary work because all forms of film presentation are in line with the characteristics of literary texts and can also be explained within the framework of text. Film is a form of art consisting of moving images or a medium of communication that can be watched and exhibited, and serves to convey messages to the general public. Many films can influence viewers after watching them, providing encouragement or motivation to take action. Filmmakers feel satisfied when their films can motivate others, and some even encourage viewers to watch them again. What is most rewarding is when their films can serve as motivation for someone to do good things for themselves or others.

Many films talk about motivation. One film related to motivation is *The Whale*, a psychological drama about an obese English teacher who wants to improve his relationship with his teenage daughter. This film takes the audience on an emotional journey, revealing the dark side of a man struggling to find forgiveness, both from others and from himself. *The Whale* is a film that not only highlights the issue of obesity but also explores family dynamics and motivation in the struggle of life. Morgan in Toeti Soekamto (1996) states that motivation can be defined as the driving or pulling force that causes behavior toward a specific goal. We can see how human needs influence the motivation and behavior of the main character in this film, Charlie.

This study aims to analyze how the main character struggles to fulfill his needs in the film *The Whale* (2022). Although many studies have been conducted on this film, this study is quite different because it will specifically discuss how the main character in *The Whale* (2022) struggles to fulfill his needs, based on Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs approach. Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs theory is one of the most popular literary research methods used to analyze literary works such as novels, short stories, and poetry. This theory is a basic needs theory proposed by Maslow. In his theory, Maslow believed that all humans are born with a tendency and struggle to realize themselves (McLeod, 2018). The effort to realize oneself is manifested in a pyramid-shaped hierarchy, where every human being has levels of needs that must be met in order to feel satisfied and become a motivator to act at each level (Hizriyani, 2019).

This study seeks to identify which levels of need the main character fulfills or fails to fulfill, how this influences his behavior and emotional struggles, and what the implications are for understanding the broader human condition as portrayed in the film. Furthermore, this research contributes to the interdisciplinary dialogue between psychology and literature/film studies by demonstrating how theoretical concepts can illuminate character motivations in storytelling. It also addresses a gap in the existing literature, as *The Whale* has not been widely analyzed from a Maslowian perspective. By offering a structured psychological reading of the film, this study aims to enrich both academic discourse and viewers' interpretations of the narrative.

METHODS OF RESEARCH

Research Design

In this study, a qualitative research approach was used. According to Moleong (2005), qualitative methods aim to understand the phenomenon of what is experienced by the research subject. Among them by explaining behavior, perceptions, motivations, actions, and others thoroughly, in a special natural context and by utilizing various natural methods, so that this research can produce a more comprehensive

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study of a phenomenon. Meanwhile, according to Mulyana (2016), Qualitative research methods in the sense of qualitative research do not rely on evidence based on mathematical logic, numerical principles, or statistical methods. Qualitative research focuses on understanding the experiences, views, or interpretations of participants in the phenomenon under study. In qualitative research methods, more emphasis is placed on the process of conducting the research itself, not on the results, qualitative research is also contextual, which means investigating phenomena in a natural context without intervening in the ongoing situation. Therefore, qualitative research is often used in the fields of social science, anthropology, sociology, education, and health to understand human and cultural aspects in depth.

Source of Data

The researcher collected data from the movie *The Whale*. *The Whale* is a 2 hour and 3 minute movie produced by Jeremy Dawson, Ari Handel, and Darren Aronofsky. The script was written by Samuel D. Hunter and directed by Darren Aronofsky. Starring Brendan Fraser, Sadie Sink, Hong Chau, Ty Simpkins, and Samantha Morton. *The Whale* is a 2022 American drama film that premiered at the Vanesia Film Festival on September 4, 2022 and was released in the United States on December 9, 2022.

The Whale tells the story of Charlie (Brendan Fraser), a reclusive English teacher who is overweight - around 272 kilograms. He is trying to reconnect with his daughter, Ellie. Charlie moves away from Ellie after he leaves his wife and daughter for a man.

Unfortunately, his girlfriend died and Charlie began to overeat as his life became miserable and he was stressed out about it. Eating was a way to cope with the pain he was experiencing after the death of his girlfriend and to cope with his depression. Eventually, his weight reached 272 kg. This weight made Charlie unlikely to have a long life.

Data

The data in this study consists of specific clips from the film *The Whale* (2022) that depict the main character, Charlie's, struggle to achieve self-actualization. This data includes visual cues, dialogue, emotional expressions, and character actions that are analyzed using Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs theory. Each clip was carefully selected based on its relevance to the five levels of Maslow's hierarchy of needs. Therefore, the data is qualitative and analyzed in depth to understand the main character's struggle to achieve self-actualization amid unfavorable conditions.

Technique of Collecting Data

According to Creswell (2014, p. 239) stated that the data collection steps include setting the boundaries for the study, collecting information through unstructured or semi structured observations and interviews, documents, and visual materials, as well as establishing the protocol for recording information. Without knowing data collection techniques, writers will not obtain data that is suitable for answering research questions. Writers also need tools and techniques as a means of collecting data.

The following steps were taken to collect data for this study:

- Watching the film *The Whale*
- Re-watching the film *The Whale*
- Identify scenes that show the main character reflecting Maslow's five levels of hierarchy of needs theory in the movie *The Whale*.

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- d. Selecting and categorizing each scene that shows the main character reflecting Maslow's five levels of Hierarchy of needs theory in the movie The Whale.

Technique of Analyzing Data

Data analysis is the process of systematic searching and organizing in monologue. The collected data will be processed by the researcher. The data will be analyzed using qualitative descriptive methods, with an approach based on Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory. The subject of this study is the film The Whale, viewed from several scenes regarding the fulfillment of Maslow's hierarchy of needs in the main characters in the film. As stated by Miles and Huberman (1994) that activities in qualitative data analysis are conducted interactively and take place continuously. In order that the data is completed. As for the data analysis process based on Huberman's theory, it can use three steps as follows:

In the data analysis process, there are three main stages that are interrelated, namely data reduction, data presentation, and verification or conclusion drawing. The first stage is data reduction, which aims to filter, classify, direct, and discard irrelevant data. The essence of this stage is to organize the data so that the final conclusions can be properly verified. In the context of this study, data reduction involves removing parts that are out of context, such as activities or dialogues that are not related to the character of Charlie and other characters who demonstrate the five levels of needs.

Next is data display, which is the stage of presenting information systematically to facilitate drawing conclusions. In qualitative research, data presentation can take the form of narratives, images, diagrams, networks, or tables. In this study, data presentation is done through film analysis that focuses on narrative structure to understand how Charlie's interactions reflect his struggle to achieve self-actualization.

The final stage is verification or drawing conclusions, which is the process of confirming the research results based on the data analysis that has been done previously. This conclusion ensures that the results obtained are valid and consistent with the analyzed data.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Results

This section describes the main character of the film The Whale, Charlie. To begin the analysis, researchers identified how Charlie's character was portrayed in the film in order to understand things that might be related to his characteristics, such as scenes, dialogues, and actions related to the fulfillment of the main character's needs. Then, the researcher uses Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory to describe the hierarchy of needs within the main character and combines it with trait theory to help researchers understand how Charlie represents actions in the process of fulfilling his needs.

Discussion

The Analysis of the Main Character

Charlie, the main character in the film The Whale, is portrayed as an online English teacher weighing approximately 272 kg (600 pounds) who lives in isolation in his apartment. He suffers from severe depression, guilt, and deep trauma that drive him to self-destructive behavior. Charlie is extremely obese. His condition began after the death of his lover, which led to depression and caused him to use food as a coping mechanism. His physical condition is extremely concerning, making it difficult for him to move and

causing him to refuse medical treatment at the hospital due to lack of insurance. Charlie is an introvert and a private person. He lives in isolation and teaches online classes with the camera off so his students cannot see his physical condition.



Figure 1 (4.2.1 Charlie teaches online classes)
(Source : *The Whale*, 2022)

Charlie is an intelligent and knowledgeable teacher, particularly in the field of literature, and often uses his knowledge to analyze his pain. Deep guilt and sadness lead him to engage in self-destructive behavior, including binge eating, which worsens his health condition. Charlie values honesty, both in himself and in others. He strives to reconnect with his daughter in an honest way. He has great regret for leaving his wife and daughter years ago to pursue a relationship with a man. This regret is one of the main drivers of his actions at the end of the film.

Charlie's main goal is to repair his broken relationship with his daughter, Ellie, whom he abandoned eight years ago. He feels guilty about what happened and wants to make sure he has done "one thing right in his life." With His Friend (Liz): Liz, who is also his nurse, is the only person who cares and tries to help him, even though Charlie often refuses her help.

(Source : *The Whale*, 2022, minutes 11:18 - 11:31)

Liz : Charlie, you have to go to the hospital. This has gone way too far.

Charlie : And rack up tens of thousands of dollars in hospital bills. I'll never be able to pay back, ever.

Liz : This affects me too, you know? You are my friend.

The Emergence of Charlie's Motivation

Charlie is portrayed as a severely obese man who does not care about himself or his surroundings. Charlie lives alone after the death of his lover, Alan, in a dark and messy apartment. In the film's prologue, Charlie shows that he has difficulty breathing, moving, and sleeping, as he says in his monologue (*The Whale*, 2022, 06:45 - 06:53) "Pain, in my chest. Hard to breathe. I couldn't take in air." This is due to his

excessive eating habits, which reflect a loss of hope and a desire to numb emotional pain rather than live. Charlie refuses to go to the hospital, despite the risk of death. His past relationship with Alan (his deceased partner) has had a profound impact on him; the grief and guilt over Alan's death weigh heavily on him. He had experienced many losses in his life, so he desperately wanted to reconnect with his estranged daughter, Ellie. Charlie sought redemption through love, especially by helping Ellie, whom he had abandoned years earlier. This motivated many of his actions, including giving her money and encouraging her to write.

Although he is not seeking recognition for himself, he tries to rebuild his self-esteem through acts of kindness and emotional honesty, as if hoping that doing good will restore his dignity. Charlie's only motivation is to atone for his past mistakes by repairing his relationship with Ellie before she dies. So he willingly collects money from his teaching just for his daughter. Charlie desperately wants to believe that Ellie has goodness within her. He wants to save Ellie from the anger and hatred he sees growing within his daughter. Charlie does have a place to live, food, and money, but these basic physiological needs are not being met properly. As a result, the next level of needs also remain unfulfilled.



Figure 2 (4.2.2 Source: *The Whale*, 2022)

The Analysis of Charlie's Needs Fulfilment Journey

This subchapter contains the explanation of how Charlie fulfills his needs and how motivation developed by the sequences of actions shown in the movie.

The first needs of human needs is physiological needs. Maslow wrote in his book that these first-level needs are the starting point of motivation theory because they are related to physiological drives (Maslow, 1993). This means that these needs are the basic needs of every individual, such as water, air, food, drink, shelter, clothing, and other basic things related to the fulfillment of human physical needs. These basic needs must be met first so that humans can survive and continue their lives. Since these are the primary needs among all needs, it is likely that the main motivation is physiological needs rather than other needs.

In this study, Charlie desperately needed motivation to fulfill his physiological needs because those needs were not fully met. Charlie is having great difficulty meeting his basic physiological needs. Although Charlie has food, he consumes unhealthy food and even needs help from Liz and a food delivery service to obtain his meals. Additionally, Charlie eats excessively, to extreme weight gain, making it difficult for him to move, breathe, and worsening his overall physical condition.



Figure 3 (4.2.3. Source : *The Whale*, 2022)



Figure 4 (4.2.3. Source : *The Whale*, 2022)



Figure 5 (4.2.3. Source : *The Whale*, 2022)



Figure 6 (4.2.3. Source : *The Whale*, 2022)



Figure 7 (4.2.3. Source : *The Whale*, 2022)



Figure 8 (4.2.3. Source : *The Whale*, 2022)

The film doesn't really explain much about the apartment where Charlie lives. However, several scenes in the film show how poorly maintained Charlie's living space is. Like Ellie, who often shows a disgusted expression when looking around Charlie's room, even Ellie writes on a piece of paper that her father's apartment smells bad, and Liz (Charlie's nurse) also often shows a frustrated expression toward the unkempt condition of the apartment. Additionally, every time Liz visits Charlie's apartment, she always tidies up the scattered items. In the image below, Liz is seen cleaning up the messy part of Charlie's home.



Figure 9 (Source : *The Whale*, 2022)

Figure 10 (Source : *The Whale*, 2022)



Figure 11 (Source : *The Whale*, 2022)

Food and shelter, which should be basic necessities, were turned into a means of punishing himself for the trauma, guilt, and regret of his past. As a result, Charlie failed to meet his physiological needs.

The second needs is Safety Needs. Once physiological needs have been relatively satisfied, a new set of needs will emerge, which we can roughly categorize into the need for safety (security, stability, dependence, protection, freedom from fear, anxiety, and confusion; needs for structure, order, law, boundaries; strength in the protector, and so on) (Maslow, 1984).



Figure 12 (Source : *The Whale*, 2022)



Figure 13(Source : *The Whale*, 2022)

The picture above shows that Charlie is in a physically unsafe condition due to his deteriorating health. He refuses to be treated at the hospital because he does not have insurance and feels that he has given up on life. However, despite this, he continues to work from home as an online lecturer to maintain his financial independence, even if only a little.



Figure 14 (Source : *The Whale*, 2022)

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Charlie's rejection of medical assistance reveals an inner conflict between hope and despair. He realizes that his life will not last much longer, but he maintains a simple routine as a last form of control over his life. His struggle at this stage is to maintain his dignity in fragile living conditions.

Charlie's security needs, particularly his critical medical requirements and physical safety, are largely unmet due to his own choices, the actions of his friends, and dangerous external influences. The lack of security that Charlie imposes on himself—isolation and refusal of medical care—is not about external threats, but rather a direct consequence of his internal psychological state, particularly his self-destructive tendencies driven by guilt. For example, after Liz informed him about his high blood pressure and the illness he was experiencing, instead of improving his diet, striving for a healthier lifestyle, or going to the hospital, he increasingly ate without restraint.



Figure 15 (Source : *The Whale*, 2022)

The third level, Love and Belonging Needs. Maslow (1943) stated that one person will feel keenly the absence of friends, or a sweetheart, or a wife, or children. He will hunger for affectionate relations with people in general, namely, for a place in his group and he will strive with great intensity to achieve this goal. The love and belonging or social needs include the needs of affection, friendship, relationship, and family.

Charlie's struggle to fulfill his emotional and social needs is the main focus of this film. Charlie left his wife and daughter when Ellie was eight years old for his college lover, Alan. Alan's suicide devastated Charlie, causing him deep sadness, which he eventually vented by overeating.



Figure 16 (Source : *The Whale*, 2022)

In the conversation shown in the picture above, Ellie hates Charlie so much that she even gives her father sleeping pills that could harm his health. Ellie is willing to return to Charlie's apartment only to get her father's money and to have her father do her housework. So, Ellie is only using her father without any sincere desire to forgive and accept him back.

Charlie lives in self-imposed isolation, with Liz as his caregiver and only friend. His desperate attempt to reconnect with Ellie is his central motivation. He hopes to restore his relationship with his teenage daughter, offering her \$120,000 if she spends time with him and agrees to finish her homework. His final attempt to repair the broken bond with Ellie is his primary motivation. He believes in Ellie and hopes she will prove that he did one thing right in his life.

Charlie's need for love and belonging is severely unmet due to past neglect and devastating loss, leading to severe isolation. His current actions are a desperate last-ditch effort to restore a sense of connection and belonging, particularly with Ellie. Charlie's deteriorating physical condition and self-destructive isolation are not merely physiological issues but tangible manifestations of the catastrophic failure and profound loss in his need for love and belonging from the past. His body literally embodies the "ruins" of his shattered relationships. Charlie receives no love from anyone, not even his own daughter. Alan, the lover he deeply loved, has passed away, and Liz, his only friend and caregiver, eventually came to hate and feel betrayed by Charlie, leaving him because she felt betrayed. What Liz knew was that Charlie had no money, unable even to pay for insurance or help Liz occasionally when she was in difficulty. However, the truth was that all the money he earned from his online teaching was saved solely to be given to his daughter.

Liz : Charlie doesn't have any money

Mary : She doesn't know? where do you think all the money from his teaching has been going? The account for Ellie? By now, it has to be huge. Over 100.000 at least, right?

Liz : Tha's not true, is it? Charlie, we could have gotten you anything you needed. Special beds, physical therapists, fucking health insurance! Last winter, when my pick-up broke down and I had to walk through the snow to get your groceries for you...



Figure 17(Source : *The Whale*, 2022)

Charlie's desperate attempts to reconnect with Ellie are not only about Ellie's well-being, but also serve as a last-ditch effort to fulfill his deeply unmet needs for love and possession and to redeem his past failures. This shows that the search for possession can become a matter of life and death, even in distorted and self-sacrificing forms.

The Fourth Needs, Self-Esteem Needs. Maslow categorizes self-esteem needs into two categories. The first is the need for self-esteem, which includes self-confidence, self-strength, self-belief, self-ability, freedom, self-discipline, and self-achievement. The second is the need for the esteem of others, which includes appreciation, recognition, respect, and attention (Maslow, 2021). Every individual has a sense of self-esteem from others. Acceptance, equality, and respect from others are expected by every individual (Maslow, 1970).

Charlie turned off his webcam because he was ashamed of his physical appearance. His compulsive overeating was described as a form of self-torture and atonement for his perceived failures and shortcomings. He was trapped in a cycle of self-imposed guilt and regret. His guilt stemmed from neglecting his family and his inability to save his lover, Alan, from depression and suicide. Her final attempt to repair the broken bond with her estranged daughter, Ellie, is the central motivation, interpreted as a desperate need for redemption and validation, especially from Ellie. She hopes Ellie will prove that she did one thing right in her life.

(Course : *The Whale*, 2022, menit 01:31 - 01:43)

Chris : Why can't he fix his camera?

Charlie : Chris, I imagine that was supposed to be a private chat. That you sent to the whole class. Well done. And yes, the camera on my laptop still doesn't work. Believe me, you are not missing much.



Figure 18 (Source : *The Whale*, 2022)

The conversation above shows one example of how Charlie does not value himself. He always turns off his camera when attending online classes, until finally one of his students questions his behavior. Charlie responds dishonestly, saying that he turns off his camera not because his laptop camera is broken, but because he is ashamed of his large body.



Figure 19 (Source : *The Whale*, 2022)

Charlie's need for recognition is severely unmet, marked by intense self-hatred, guilt, and a shattered self-image. His final actions are desperate, albeit distorted, attempts to achieve self-worth and redemption. As the image above shows, the more guilt and regret he feels, the more he wants to eat large

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portions and lose himself. Charlie's deteriorating physical condition and self-destructive behavior are not merely physical or emotional issues, but a deep and literal manifestation of his shattered self-worth and profound self-hatred, transforming his body into a terrifying figure. He even views himself as repulsive. He has no confidence, self-belief, or optimism in his life. Charlie struggles with low self-esteem and feelings of failure as a father, partner, and human being.

Independence is part of self-esteem, and physically speaking, Charlie is very dependent on others. He cannot stand or walk independently. Due to his large body, he has difficulty standing or walking on his own. Charlie needs his cane to get to the bathroom, bedroom, kitchen, or bookshelf. Or he needs Liz to tidy up his living space.

The highest level of needs is Self-Actualization. Once the previous needs have been met, the time will come when a person will reach the fifth and highest need in Maslow's hierarchy of needs, namely the need for self-actualization. Maslow (1943) describes this level as the desire to accomplish everything that one can, and "to become everything one is capable of becoming"

Self-actualization can be loosely described as the full use and exploitation of talents, abilities, potential, and so on. People who self-actualize prioritize their own personal growth and do not care too much about the opinions of others. It can be concluded that self-actualized people do not need the recognition of others to know their worth because they have maximized their abilities in everything they want.

Self-actualization involves realizing one's full potential and achieving meaningful goals. In this study, Charlie highly values honesty in his teaching, instructing students to disregard class assignments and write only what is honest. He reads their honest submissions and praises Ellie's eighth-grade essay on Moby-Dick as the most honest essay he has ever read, which has long entertained him. However, honesty in this context is not a form of self-actualization. The honesty Charlie showed his students by telling them about his physical condition was merely a form of self-redemption for his past guilt, as Charlie knew his time was running out.



Figure 20 (Source : *The Whale*, 2022)

Regarding honesty, which is one of the characteristics of self-actualization in Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory, Charlie is not entirely honest. It can be seen that Charlie hides the fact that he has more than enough money from Liz. Liz really hopes that Charlie will go to the hospital and take out insurance so that he can receive proper treatment.

In this study, the main character, Charlie, has not reached the highest level of the hierarchy, namely self-actualization. Charlie is closely related to his physical death. Physical needs are the most basic needs in Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory. However, Charlie cannot fulfill his physical needs properly, which are basic needs for higher needs to be fulfilled.

Charlie has not fulfilled his need for self-actualization because he is only focused on being accepted by his daughter, but Charlie forgets that he has not accepted himself. Clark (in Juwita Sari & Reza, 2013) argues that individuals who are positively accepted by others will tend to develop positive attitudes toward themselves and accept themselves more. Additionally, they desire recognition for themselves, so that their self-acceptance becomes stronger, knowing that they are valued by others, which is an important psychological factor in helping them forget the negative aspects of their lives and think more positively about their environment. In the film *The Whale* (2022), Charlie is portrayed as someone who cannot think positively, is always insecure, and is haunted by deep guilt. Therefore, Charlie does not do anything to improve himself, such as exercising, eating healthily, or avoiding overeating. Charlie has no desire to be healthy; he does not fight for himself or open up to socialize with others, and he is even too ashamed to meet his regular pizza delivery person.

(Source : *The Whale*, 2022, minutes 1:30:47 - 1:31: 15)

Dan : Gambino's!!!

Charlie : Yeah

Dan : Charlie?

Charlie : Yeah, the money is in the, um...

Dan : Sure

Every time a pizza delivery person arrives to deliver Charlie's order, they only say the above dialogue without meeting face to face. After the delivery person leaves, Charlie goes outside to pick up his pizza.

Thus, it can be seen that other people (his daughter) find it difficult to accept Charlie as their father because Charlie does not accept himself. Self-actualization, from Abraham Maslow's perspective, occupies the highest level because it is related to the development of skills and the potential of each individual. Germer (2009) describes self-acceptance as an individual's ability to have a positive view of themselves, which needs to be developed. Since Charlie does not accept himself, he finds it difficult to develop his potential. In the process of self-actualization, the main character in the film *The Whale* (2022) is indeed very complex, and it is difficult to say that Charlie has fully achieved self-actualization in the complete sense of Maslow's theory. His basic needs (especially physical health) are not met, and his life ends tragically. Self-actualization must be based on the individual's personal desire to become the best version of themselves based on their abilities, skills, and potential.

CONCLUSION

After analyzing Darren Aronofsky's 2022 film *The Whale* using Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory, the researcher concluded that: All five levels of Maslow's hierarchy of needs—physiological needs, safety needs, love and belonging needs, esteem needs, and self-actualization needs—are not reflected in Charlie, the main character of *The Whale* (2022). The fulfillment of the main character's needs begins at the lowest level, which is physiological. This need is not fulfilled because Charlie overeats, cannot breathe properly, and lives in a messy, dark, and neglected home. At the next level, the main character's need for safety is not fulfilled because his physical and medical safety is actively undermined by his own choices and external dynamics. The main character's love and belonging needs are severely unmet because Charlie has lost his lover, Alan, and his daughter refuses to acknowledge him as her father. His esteem needs are also severely unmet because he constantly feels inferior and remains dependent on others, specifically Liz. Finally, the main character's self-actualization needs are unmet because he makes no effort to improve himself after recognizing his mistakes and shortcomings.

Although his five levels of needs are not fulfilled, or he has not become a self-actualized person, the main character's motivation in pursuing a connection with his daughter is maximal. He goes to great lengths, such as giving all the money he earns from teaching online to his daughter, and he strongly believes that his daughter will become a better person, even though her biological mother says that she is a bad child. Maslow's theory provides an invaluable lens for understanding the complex motivations behind Charlie's self-destructive behavior and his primary drive toward a meaningful resolution, albeit a tragic one. The film highlights that while Maslow's hierarchy offers a strong framework, human motivation in the face of deep suffering can exhibit complex dynamics.

SUGGESTIONS

The author uses a psychological approach in analyzing the film *The Whale* (2022). Based on the data found by the researcher, there are several interesting issues that are worth further analysis besides the issue of fulfilling human needs. If future researchers use this theory, the author suggests complementing this study by further explaining how the main character fulfills his need for self-actualization.

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