

SELF ESTEEM IN MEDELEINE L'ENGLE'S *A WRINKLE IN TIME*

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Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis proses tercapainya kebutuhan manusia oleh Meg Murry serta faktor yang mempengaruhi. Hirarki kebutuhan manusia oleh Abraham H. Maslow adalah landasan teori utama pada penelitian tersebut. Informasi tekstual dalam novel merupakan dasar dalam pembuatan penelitian ini, yang menjadikan penelitian ini sebagai studi kualitatif deskriptif. Data utama pada penelitian ini adalah *A Wrinkle in Time* oleh Madeleine L'Engle serta artikel jurnal sebagai pendukung. Penelitian dilakukan dengan menganalisis proses untuk memenuhi kebutuhan manusia dengan teori hirarki kebutuhan manusia serta faktor pendukungnya. Penelitian ini berfokus pada perjalanan Meg, Charles, dan Calvin untuk menyelamatkan ayah Meg dan Charles yang terjebak dalam dunia paralel. Hasil dari penelitian ini adalah Meg berhasil memenuhi tahap ketiga dari kebutuhan manusia dengan bantuan keluarga, teman, dan lingkungan yang tepat. Meg juga menyadari bahwa kekurangan yang dia miliki tidak selamanya menjadi penghambat untuk mencintai diri sendiri.

Keywords: Cinta Diri, Hirarki kebutuhan manusia, Harga Diri

Abstract

This study aims to analyze the process of achieving human needs by Meg Murry and its influencing factors. Abraham H. Maslow's hierarchy of human needs is the main theoretical basis for this research. This research uses textual information in the novel as a basis, which makes this research a descriptive qualitative study. The main data in this study are *A Wrinkle in Time* by Madeleine L'Engle and journal articles as supporting material. The research was conducted by analyzing the process to get the peak of human needs with the hierarchy theory of human needs and the supporting factors. This research focuses on the time travel of Meg, Charles, and Calvin to save Meg and Charles' father who are trapped in a parallel world. The result of this research is that Meg has succeeded in fulfilling the self esteem needs with the help of family, friends, and the right environment. Meg also realizes that the flaws she has are not always an obstacle to loving herself.

Keywords: Self Love, Hierarchy of Human Needs, Self Esteem

INTRODUCTION

As a human being must have needs that we must fulfill so we are not to feel deficient. It is something fundamental for humans to continue their live. There are many different meanings about human needs. One of the understandings of needs is satisfaction that arises after achieving something and continues to look for other achievements to occupy the highest peak of need, namely Self actualization by Abraham Maslow. (McLeod & HCC, 2013) He defines that human needs have five levels namely physical needs, safety needs, belonging needs, esteem needs, and the highest is self actualization. (Taormina & Gao, 2013) The hierarchy of basic needs seems to be the most obvious instrument for describing human needs. In psychology, there is not much effort to build a standard for measuring human needs satisfaction. (Saednia & Nor, 2013) To understand the underlying causes of human behavior, psychologists who study human behavior have

struggled to understand the underlying causes of behavior. A number of theories have been put forward about human needs related to what drives, energizes, and maintains behavior. (Rosenfeld, Culbertson, & Magnusson, 1992)

Abraham Harold Maslow is known as the father of humanistic psychology while psychology itself is called humanism, with information as a reaction to psychoanalysis and behaviorism which dominated the world of psychology in the 1950s. Human need itself focuses on the potential of each individual and emphasizes the importance of growth and self-actualization. Basically people are good people according to humanistic psychology but mental and social problems arise from deviations that are influenced by the environment. As a theory of needs, Maslow proposed that humans can be classified into various categories. However, unlike other theorists, human needs can be arranged in a hierarchy of prepotency and probability of appearance. (Wahba, Mahmoud. A, Bridwell, 1976)

The researcher was interested in conducting research on the hierarchy of needs based on main character in the novel *A Wrinkle in Time* using the psychological approach of Abraham H. Maslow. This novel has a problem about characters who want to fulfill their needs. This analysis analyzes the needs of the main character, Meg Murry. Human needs theory is used to know a lot about human needs, especially fifth levels of the hierarchy.

This research focuses on Meg Murry's character and find how she tries to fulfill her self esteem need through dialogue from the novel and the story itself based on hierarchy of needs theory by Abraham H. Maslow. *A Wrinkle in Time* written by Madeleine L'Engle which was released in 1962 and after a year of release, this book received a Newberry Award and made *A Wrinkle in Time* the famous work of Madeleine L'Engle which before it actually appeared, this book has been rejected by several publishing companies. This novel is a depiction of a young medeleine that has the same nature as the main female actor in this novel. The author often compares herself to a female hero, Meg Murry, in her own childhood, felt that she was always awkward, disheveled, and out of place. Of course, Meg is now considered one of the greatest female protagonists in science fiction and fantasy, without which we might not have Hermione Granger or Katniss Everdeen.

This novel is a combination of science fiction and fantasy, in the novel *A Wrinkle in Time*, it is told about a girl named Meg Murry who tries to solve the problem of the disappearance of her father Dr. Murry with her younger brother Charles Wallace. his father who is a scientist with his creation of ways to visit other planets only by relying on the power of the mind and finding the right frequency to penetrate other dimensions of the universe.

METHOD

This research uses a psychological approach to literature which emphasize to how researchers considers a series of events that lead to actions they learn, with the aim of describing a dialogue to understand how human behavior is inside or to learn about school life, the environment, friendship, and so on. In analyzing data, this research was carried out through several stages. First, carefully read the novel *A Wrinkle in Time* and pay attention to each of the spoken words from the Meg Murry character that can be used as evidence of analysis. Second, the researcher's using

the theory from Abraham Maslow to analyze data. Third, explaining the data from the dialogue between the actors or the narrator using an analytical descriptive method to explain Meg Murry's character acting as the main character, analyzing the problems in the main character, and how this main character fulfill her needs seen from Abraham Maslow's theory. Finally, the researcher can conclude the results of the analysis.

The Hierarchy of Needs

Human needs categorize themselves in a pre-potency hierarchy. That is to say, human needs usually depend on the satisfaction of previous needs that have been achieved. (A.H. Maslow, 1943) Basic human needs theory aims to explain and understand and provide solutions to all conflicts. The theory comes from psychology, political science, and sociology. (Avruch & Mitchell, 2013)



Figures 1.1: Hierarchy of Needs Pyramids

Source: <https://datadesign.wordpress.com/2011/01/14/maslows-pyramid/>

If someone has not succeeded in meeting their needs at a certain level it will cause pathological events, namely maladaptive or anti-social behavior. Physiological Needs (the needs of the body); Safety Needs (physical and emotional); Love and Belonging Needs (unconditional); and Esteem Needs (the need to be able to contribute to society) here is the pyramid that describes Maslow's theory of needs. (Maslow, n.d.)

Physiological Needs

These needs are the most basic needs needed by humans to maintain their needs physically. These needs include food, water, house, oxygen, sleep and so on. (McLeod & HCC, 2013)

Safety Needs

Safety needs will arise if physiological needs are satisfactory because Maslow believes that humans will tend to fulfill their needs based on the pyramid of needs. In this case security needs occupy second place after physiological needs. (A.H. Maslow, 1943) Safety needs also can describe as protection from elements, security, order, law, boundaries, stability, freedom from fear. (McLeod & HCC, 2013)

Love and Belonging

This need also can describe as a need of accomplishment, mastery, independence, status, dominance, prestige, self-esteem, and respect from others. (McLeod & HCC, 2013) This includes the need to have friends and be accepted by others. (Rosenfeld et al., 1992)

Esteem

Satisfaction in self-esteem needs leads feelings of self-confidence, value, strength, ability, and adequacy that are very useful in life and if a person fails to meet these needs there will be feelings of humility, weakness and helplessness. (A.H. Maslow, 1943)

Self Actualization

Psychologist Abraham Maslow believes that human needs are based on people who seek fulfillment and change through personal growth. People who are able to actualize themselves are people who are able to do everything they do. (McLeod & HCC, 2013) Everyone has a unique way to actualize themselves. For some people, self-actualization can be achieved through the creation of works of art or literature, sports, in the classroom, or in a corporate environment. Self-actualization is a human need that is difficult to define because that need is at the top of the pyramid of human needs theory, making it even more abstract. (Taormina & Gao, 2013) Self actualization is a subjective concept, many psychologists and social scientists have difficulty measuring it. There are two understandings used to measure self-actualization, namely personal orientation inventory and short index of self actualization. (Souza, 2018).

ANALYSIS

The Depiction of Self Esteem Needs in Meg Murry's *A Wrinkle in Time*

Self Esteem is not formed immediately, it will begin to form on someone when the previous needs or needs that are one level below are exceeded then it will be fulfilled by itself. Same as Meg Murry who is trying to complete her needs, in which many processes she goes through and the impact she will receive when those needs are complete. Parents, siblings, close friends and acquaintances are factors that support the fulfillment of these needs because talk, gestures, and the way they love and convince Meg that she is a decent creature with all her perfection and imperfection.

Meg Murry's Lack of Confidence

Margaret Murry or commonly called Meg Murry is a teenage girl who has a problem with self-confidence or esteem. She always compared herself to her beautiful and intelligent mother; she always hated herself which she thought was ugly and stupid. She was always alone at school and considered herself unfit to make friends so she just stand apart and had no friends even though according to her teacher she was smart enough only she closed herself to not get along.

"Mrs. Murry gently touched Meg's bruised cheek. Meg looked up at her mother, half in loving admiration, half in sullen resentment. It was not an advantage to have a mother who was a scientist and a beauty as well. Mrs. Murry's flaming red hair, creamy skin, and violet eyes with long dark lashes, seemed even more spectacular in comparison with Meg's outrageous plainness." (L'ENGLE, 2007: 16)

People will actualize themselves when they have shown characteristics such as spontaneity, independent thinking, self-exploration, and compassion. They tend to pursue knowledge, justice, and beauty but not by comparing themselves to others. (Souza, 2018) Meg was very good at judging her mother's perfection but it was difficult to judge her perfection. She thought that the perfection of others must become her own too. It is seen in the monologue that Meg greatly admired her mother's physical perfection and never acknowledged her strengths. It can be concluded that Meg needs someone or a situation that can provoke her to start thinking about her own perfection, which could be someone else's

imperfection. Having a family with brain, beauty, and good social status are not always profitable. There are so many pressures to deal with. People will deliberately ask for more achievement from kids because they must have done something bigger than their parents. That is the law and they must do. Meg seems to overthink about that, she still wonders why she was born like this not as pretty as her mom. From this simple question will grow a big mindset that she is different from her parents and never ever achieve something as big as their parent have done whereas she could do anything beyond. She just has not realized that and kept burying her soul in a wrong mindset.

“I hate being an oddball,” Meg said. “It’s hard on Sandy and Dennys, too. I don’t know if they’re really like everybody else, or if they’re just able to pretend they are. I try to pretend, but it isn’t any help.”(L’ENGLE, 2007: 17)

Being someone different is not a difference but a uniqueness. Being ugly and stupid is not a disgrace but evil is what makes someone different. A good person will always be loved even though she is not smart because people concerned with comfort in socializing rather than intelligence because these circumstances will make someone more competitive in relationships while a relationship is based on mutual attraction. Meg seems to be one of those people who lack that understanding because she still compares herself to her mom. In the quote above Meg says that she pretended to be someone else so that she was considered the same as the others and it didn't seem to work. The situation will get worse if Meg does not try to open up to consult or just talk to her parents. In this situation seems that the need for confidence in Meg has not been fulfilled. Meg has not been able to accept her weakness as a strength.

Meg Murry’s Acceptance of Fact

“Maybe if I weren’t so repulsive-looking—maybe if I were pretty like you—”(L’ENGLE, 2007: 18). Meg starts to open up her thought to her mother and assume that she is worse than her but from this sentence Meg already admit and gave her opinion to her mother. This is Meg’s first step to face the reality and search what she mastered in.

“I? Heavens no. I’m blessed with more brains and opportunities than many people, but there’s nothing about me that breaks out of the ordinary mold.”

“Your looks do,” Meg said.

Mrs. Murry laughed. “You just haven’t had enough basis for comparison, Meg. I’m very ordinary, really.”(L’ENGLE, 2007: 55)

Meg's move to share her thoughts with her mother is a major step towards accepting her imperfections. Support from others plays a role in one's psychology. Fortunately, Meg's mom is a mother who never compares her kids. She realizes that every child has their own particularity in them, making it easier for Meg to understand that so far what has been the standard of perfection in a person was wrong. Whereas beauty is not a benchmark for someone to look perfect for others, it doesn't even need someone to say that they are perfect because perfection comes from them. How they love and accept perfection and its imperfections is the key to self-confidence. From the evidence above it can be explained that Meg's mother also realized that it was futile to compare her with that because indeed every human being was created differently. Being who you are is the key to shine, that what Meg’s mother wants to say. She just needs to stand and say “Hey, I am pretty and you too!!” go and meet someone who knows you best. What she going to do is leave them who give bad circumstance then catch someone who brings the happiness to you.

“Mother’s not a bit pretty; she’s beautiful,” Charles Wallace announced, slicing liverwurst.

“Therefore I bet she was awful at your age.” “How right you are,” Mrs. Murry said. “Just give yourself time, Meg.”(L’ENGLE, 2007: 18)

Self-esteem can be defined as a mechanism that stimulates self-development, which is identified as the process of developing personality from intellectual activities. (Espacios et al., 2018) The process is painful. Everyone is basically born to be a good person just how the environment affects that person. Unfortunately, Meg is unaware of the process. There is a process where a person becomes the worst even though it is not about the physical or maybe there are people who always feel happy regardless of their physical form. Indeed a person's thoughts are so abstract that they cannot be a definite rule for being happy. Happiness has its own version for each individual. Charles also realized this by saying that maybe his mother had been an ugly girl when she was a child and even worse than Meg, so Charles expects Meg not to compare physical beauty as a measure of happiness.

“Well, you know what, you’ve got dream-boat eyes,” Calvin said. “Listen, you go right on wearing your glasses. I don’t think I want anybody else to see what gorgeous eyes you have.”(L’ENGLE, 2007: 61)

Calvin is a young man who accidentally has a crush on Meg but he doesn't express it. The way Calvin compliments Meg's beauty is one way for Meg to realize that she is actually beautiful. All Meg needed was a compliment from someone that she was pretty and smart enough. If someone has found the right person it will automatically open her aura. She will look really beautiful because she already thinks of herself as beautiful and that embarrassment will disappear if she can open her feelings to the right person. Likewise with Meg, after meeting with Calvin she realized that it is useless to fall into the standards of beauty. She realizes that she is beautiful in her own way.

“Oh, yes, you do. You’ve seen at home how true it is. You know that’s the reason you’re not happy at school. Because you’re different.”

“I’m different, and I’m happy,” Calvin said.

“But you pretend that you aren’t different.”

“I’m different, and I like being different.”
Calvin’s voice was unnaturally loud.

“Maybe I don’t like being different,” Meg said, “but I don’t want to be like everybody else, either.”(L’ENGLE, 2007:155)

Calvin was probably the first guy Meg became friends with and it was he who started to realize that being a different person wasn't a mistake. According to Calvin, the point is that everyone is created different, only that Meg has hidden it. Sometimes someone just has to accept what God has predestined and how in the future he must address these differences. Calvin's words to Meg suggest that he also feels different but he already enjoys the difference and he feels happy. Calvin hopes that Meg can also make peace with the situation and improve herself to be even better.

Meg Murry’s Self-esteem

“Come on,” Meg said impatiently. “Come on, let’s go!” She was completely unaware that her voice was trembling like an aspen leaf. She took Charles Wallace and Calvin each by the hand and started down the hill.”(L’ENGLE, 2007: 114)

In the dialogue above, it describes Meg, Calvin, and Charles's efforts to save themselves from danger. It seems that Meg has started to take over the team. There is a growing feeling that Meg is not the same person anymore. That trait was not Meg's old character. The incident explained that the emergence of the initiative to lead the team was the beginning of the formation of self-esteem because self-confidence had been formed in it. At that critical moment, Meg could still think clearly unfazed by the problems they were facing.

“Mrs Whatsit had said, “Meg, I give you your faults.” What were her greatest faults? Anger, impatience, stubbornness. Yes, it was to her faults that she turned to save herself now.”(L’ENGLE, 2007: 176)

Not many people realize that it is a bad attitude that drives a person to be better as long as the processes and factors that influence them are on the right path. Same as Meg, when Mrs. Whatsit says that all Meg has is her fault. It can help her in certain circumstances, which means that someone's bad character will become a shield for her which only she understands because the perspectives of people are different so what Meg thinks is a bad thing turns out to be a savior for her. Anything that has become an absolute destiny for someone will essentially be the best if that person can make it true for everyone.

“We hold these truths to be self-evident!” she shouted, “that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.”(L’ENGLE, 2007: 176)

As time goes by, Meg has been processing and fighting her ego for emotional harmony. She had dared to express an opinion she considered wrong. God has indeed created humans with the same blessings even though many people do not realize, starting from freedom to determine happiness. Meg has determined what makes her happy. She has realized about respecting herself with what God has blessed her, that she is a free, beautiful, smart, and loved by her family and friends.

“For a moment her brain reeled with confusion. Then came a moment of blazing truth. “No!” she cried triumphantly. “Like and equal are not the same thing at all!”(L’ENGLE, 2007: 177)

Someone can choose to look like someone else but they can't be that person. Why? Because they are not the same person, like and equal are not one definition, they are different. That thing is being broken by Meg; she argues that always pretending or imitating what other people do is not happiness for her either. What makes people happy doesn't actually make her happy, memorizing the periodic table makes her happy but not for some. According to Meg, just enough for her to feel free without having to live in the shadows of other people's perfection is a major achievement in her emotional stability.

Tears almost came to her eyes at the gentle use of the old nickname. "I wanted you to do it all for me. I wanted everything to be all easy and simple. . . . So I tried to pretend that it was all your fault. . . because I was scared, and I didn't want to have to do anything myself—"(L'ENGLE, 2007: 220)

According to (Abdul & Al, 2020), the age and level of education of a person are very important in the process of forming self-actualization while based on (Kaufman, 2018) stated that self esteem does not relate with age or education but number of friends, romantic relationship in one's life and mental illness. For Meg who is 13 years old is an extraordinary achievement. The actualization process should be formed when a person reaches adulthood. At this point Meg has actualized herself to stop pretending. She wants to be what she is, she wants to love her family with all the flaws it has. Meg has realized that loving and liking something does not just love its strengths. The fact that strengths and weaknesses are a unity, nothing is perfect. Meg had revealed everything to her father that she was the reason why he should pretend and it was the right move. Meg's father praised his son's courage and stared proudly that Meg had grown up to be a girl that his family, friends and environment should be proud of.

"Father said it was all right for me to be afraid. He said to go ahead and be afraid. And Mrs Who said—I don't understand what she said but I think it was meant to make me not hate being only me, and me being the way I am. And Mrs Whatsit said to remember that she loves me. That's what I have to think about. Not about being afraid. Or not as smart as IT. Mrs Whatsit loves me. That's quite something, to be loved by someone like Mrs Whatsit."(L'ENGLE, 2007: 226)

Maslow believes that self-esteem is related to finding out about one's potential. They are not a

biological slave and ego. They deserve the freedom to express themselves without any outside subjectivity. Once they get that understanding, they usually focus on using their potential to create the harmonization they want(Souza, 2018). Another thing that Meg believed was that it was okay to be a coward as long as you were still being yourself. Being cowards can be trained but pretending to be someone else is a disease. It can be interpreted that actually self-actualization likes whatever she has and how to use this potential to become an achievement. As long as the need for love and comfort is met, it is possible to self-actualize.

"Stop." Mrs Whatsit held up her hand. "We gave you gifts the last time we took you to Camazotz. We will not let you go empty-handed this time. But what we can give you now is nothing you can touch with your hands. I give you my love, Meg. Never forget that. My love always."(L'ENGLE, 2007: 222)

In the end, what Meg needs is courage and love from the people she cares about. Love can put pressure on Meg to actualize herself. Support and confidence are the keys to developing the potential for Meg. The step of opening yourself up to be loved by those around you is the right step so that achievement can be achieved.

"She knew!"

"Love."

"That was what she had that IT did not have. She had Mrs Whatsit's love, and her father's, and her mother's, and the real Charles Wallace's love, and the twins', and Aunt Beast's." (L'ENGLE, 2007: 228)

For Meg, love is the answer to all the questions plaguing her in the self-actualization process. In fact, love does not only determine the actualization process in Meg. Love also can be a savior for Meg, the love she gets can lead her to choose the right path. Everyone does have love but how and why love can change a person is still a mystery because there is no definite benchmark for it.

"Meg, you did it!" Calvin shouted. "You saved Charles!" "I'm very proud of you, my daughter." Mr. Murry kissed her gravely, then turned toward the house." (L'ENGLE, 2007: 231)

Being what you really want is true self actualization. In the end, the most important event in the process of self-actualization is an achievement. Meg proved that she is not someone who likes to compare herself with other people

anymore. Meg's rescue mission for Charles is proof that Meg has completed a series of self-actualization processes. The achievement in self-actualizing is a concrete thing why a person can be said to have actualized himself. Meg has cured her mental illness and deserves to be considered to have ended the long process of self-actualization.

CONCLUSION

This study tells how the hierarchy of needs theory on forth level self esteem by Abraham H. Maslow affects the main character Margaret Murry in the novel *Medeleine L'Engle's A Wrinkle in Time*, who in her case is looking for identity or acceptance of facts. Self esteem needs that Meg tries to fulfill with the hope of satisfying emotional stability so that there is harmony in life. In this research, focuses on how the main character can fulfill human needs. Based on the analysis, it can be concluded that self esteem is the abstract human need because it is related with feeling or satisfaction. In this case, the way Meg always comparing herself with her mother is a factor why it is difficult for her to accept herself because she still think that child's appearance and intelligence will always be the same as her parent or even more. Fortunately, the understanding given by parents and people around her is enough to make her realize that actually being herself is the most important thing to do right now, because they also realize that Meg is perfect for them. Regardless of the background of Meg's parents, her sibling and friend still love her the way she is.

The process of how self esteem is formed is not the same from one individual to another, for Meg, she is struggling not to compare herself with others. She believed that every human being was created by God with his own style and characteristics where there would always be advantages and disadvantages. Many factors that can affect the emotional stability experienced by Meg, parents, friends, and the environment are the determining factors for the formation of the self-esteem process. A sign of achieving self-esteem is when Meg can accept shortcomings and make it a potential for achieving appreciation in life. Appreciation or success in this process does not have to be a big achievement, but starting from an open mindedness to change and feelings of love for parents, siblings and people around it are success in a self-esteem process. Self-esteem is how you love yourself which can lead to achieving satisfaction in life.

At the end of the analysis, Meg has achieved the success a mission to rescue her younger brother. Although Meg's achievement is not classified as a big achievement but it deserves to be appreciated because fighting against ego is not an easy matter for children. One of indication for achieving self esteem need is when they already feel valuable (CAST, ALICIA D., 2002). After all of problem that Meg already faced, she realized that she is loved and precious for her family and friend. Those can be enough to be a proof that Meg already fulfilled self-esteem need. Still this research is far from perfect and really needs suggestions and critics. Moreover, this study would give an information related to how the main character Meg Murry fulfill her needs and hoping that this study can be a motivation so everybody can fulfill their needs as good as Meg Murry did in this story. This study is also expected to add references to the English department, especially for literature students who have an interest in basic human needs. For future researchers, there will be a lot of literary work that can be analyzed using the hierarchy of needs theory by Abraham H. Maslow. The researcher hopes that there will be many studies on basic human needs.

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