

# COMPARING THE PROTAGONISTS' CHANGES OF LIFE NEEDS AND THE FULFILLMENTS IN *CAST AWAY* (2000) AND *THE MARTIAN* (2015)

## A Psychological Study of Literature

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### Abstract

In either literature or real life, one's motivation dealing with his/her satisfaction and need fulfillment in life can change as time goes by when experiencing some significant life transformation. Based on the above statement, this study was conducted. The material objects chosen were *Cast Away* (2000) and *The Martian* (2015), for there was some very similar formula in both movies in terms of plot, including the protagonists' phases of life, characteristics of setting and conflicts experienced by the protagonists related the studied topic. By applying Maslow's theory of hierarchy of needs, the study was aimed at finding out the life needs of Chuck Noland, the protagonist in *Cast Away*, Mark Watney, the protagonist in *The Martian* including their changes and fulfillments within three different phases of life. The result showed that in both movies the protagonists experienced three different phases of life, which dealt significantly with what their ultimate life needs were within each phase and to what extent that the characters' were motivated to fulfill the needs. In the first phase, the protagonists tried to fulfill esteem need (4<sup>th</sup> level in hierarchy of needs). In the second phase, the characters pursued the fulfillment of belonging and love need (3<sup>th</sup> level in hierarchy of needs). And, in the third phase, both protagonists elevated the life standards due to fulfillment of (some of) the needs in previous phase. Chuck Noland in *Cast Away* had pursued love need but had not yet fulfilled belonging need (3<sup>th</sup> level in hierarchy of needs). Meanwhile Mark Watney in *The Martian* was already in process of fulfilling self-actualization (5<sup>th</sup>/top level in hierarchy of needs). It is concluded that when people experience some life transformations, regardless in better or worse situations that result in changes of life needs, they will try to adjust themselves to the new situations by trying to fulfill the new needs, neglecting the needs that they were pursuing in the previous situation.

**Keywords:** life needs, need fulfillments, hierarchy of needs, comparative study, film

### Introduction

Every human being has different life needs and ways to fulfill them. One's life needs and fulfillments are influenced by the surrounding environment as well as where he or she lives. Then, what about life needs and the fulfillments of someone stranded on an uninhabited island or a strange planet alone for a long time? This kind of situation happens to Chuck Noland in *Cast Away* (2000) and Mark Watney in *The Martian* (2015).

In both movies, Chuck Noland and Mark Watney is described getting a disaster when they are at work. Chuck Noland is stranded on uninhabited island and Mark Watney lives in Mars alone for a long time. Chuck Noland and Mark Watney get a lot of

problem during their isolations, loses their jobs and home, and they are all alone. Besides, they are lack of food supplies to eat. Both of the protagonists have no option but to survive and make attempts to return to their normal environments. At the same time, must keep their mind stable. As a consequence, they exploit anything around to eat and protect themselves. Finally, they find a way to return to their environments and continue their lives.

In this research, both movies are compared dealing with such similarities in the formulaic plots. Those movies are basically focused on the central characters' problems (what Chuck Noland and Mark Watney are experiencing). The researchers use psychological approach to

compare the central characters' hierarchy of needs before, during, and after their isolations.

The researchers use Abraham Maslow's psychological theory namely Hierarchy of Needs.

## Methodology

### 1. Research Approach

In this research, the researchers use psychological approach with Abraham Maslow's theory of Hierarchy of Needs. It helps to analyze and compare the hierarchy needs of the central character or protagonist in *Cast Away* (2000) and in *The Martian* (2015).

### 2. Types of Data

In this research, the researchers determines two categories of the resources, they are primary and secondary data. The primary data in this research is Robert Zemeckis's *Cast Away* (2000) and Ridley Scott's *The Martian* (2015). Whereas the secondary data include library and online resources that contains various references such as books, journals, learning materials, and other resources. It is able to help the researchers get information to analyze the primary data.

### 3. Technique of Data Collection, Analysis, and Presentation

#### a. Technique of Data Collection

In collecting and analyzing the data of this research, the researchers watch and take note any kind of relevant information or data from the movies. The data that are used

in this research are dialogues, actions, and pictures of both of the central characters.

#### b. Technique of Data Analysis

The researchers use qualitative descriptive technique to analyze the data until the researchers find out the results and make a conclusion of the data.

#### c. Technique of Data Presentation

Data is presented in form of combination between screenshots (images) and quotations (texts).

## Findings and Discussion

The researchers find some similarities and differences of protagonists' hierarchy of needs in *Cast Away* (2000) and *The Martian* (2015). The data analysis is in the following.

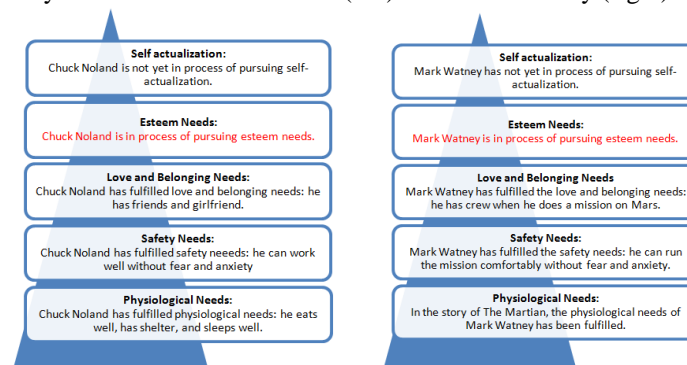
### 1. Hierarchy of Needs of Chuck Noland in *Cast Away* (2000) and Mark Watney in *The Martian* (2015).

The hierarchy of needs of Chuck Noland in *Cast Away* (2000) and Mark Watney in *The Martian* (2015) are divided into three phases of life, they are: Before, during, and after they are isolated on a strange place.

#### a. Hierarchy of needs of Chuck Noland in *Cast Away* (2000) and Mark Watney in *The Martian* (2015) before they being isolated on strange place.

Before Chuck Noland and Mark Watney get accident, they have similar level of hierarchy of needs. They have already reached into esteem need level. It is can be seen in diagram below.

Diagram 1. Hierarchy of Needs of Chuck Nolan (left) and Mark Watney (right) and before Isolated

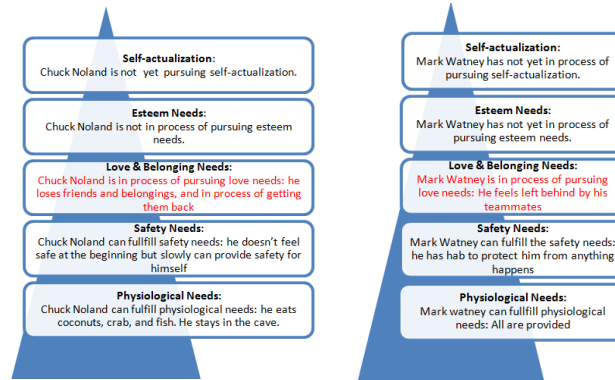


b. Hierarchy of needs of Chuck Noland in *Cast Away* (2000) and Mark Watney in *The Martian* (2015) when they were isolated in strange place.

Mars, they have similar level of hierarchy of needs. They have already reached into love and belonging need. It can be seen in diagram below.

When Chuck Noland stranded on the uninhabited island and Mark Watney lost in

Diagram 2. Hierarchy of Needs Diagram of Chuck Noland (left) and Mark Watney (right) during isolation

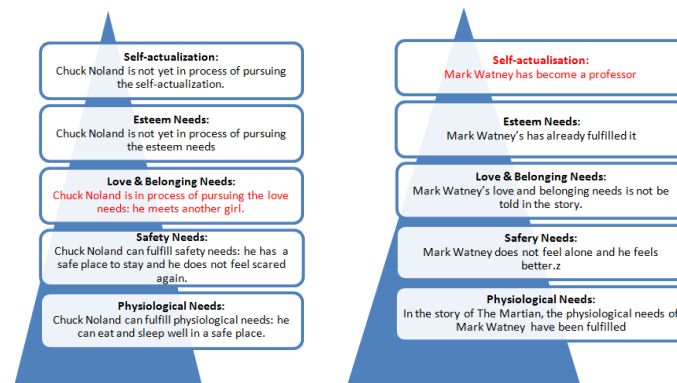


c. Hierarchy of needs of Chuck Noland in *Cast Away* (2000) and Mark Watney in *The Martian* (2015) after they are saved from isolated place.

and Mark Watney are diferent. Chuck Noland still in process to pursuing the love and belonging needs because after he back home he lost his girlfriend. Whereas, Mark Watney can fulfill the highest level of hierarchy of needs (self-actualization. After he back to the Earth he become a professor. It can be seen in diagram below.

After Chuck Noland and Mark Watney saved from isolated place, they back to normal life. In this place the level of hierarchy of needs between Chuck Noland

Diagram 3. Hierarchy of Needs Diagram of Chuck Noland (left) and Mark Watney (right) after being saved from isolation



### Conclusion

In the analysis of hierarchy of needs of Chuck Noland in *Cast Away* (2000) and Mark Watney in *The Martian* (2015), the researchers divide the hierarchy of needs into three phases of life, i.e. before, during and

after Chuck Noland and Mark Watney are isolated on a strange place. According to that, there are some changes or shifts of needs of both characters during their three phases of life. Hence, it is concluded that when people experience some life

transformations, regardless in better or worse situations that result in changes of life needs, they will try to adjust themselves to the new situations by trying to fulfill the new needs, neglecting the needs that they were pursuing in the previous situation.

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