

Hierarchy of Needs of the Main Character in Kate DiCamillo's "The Magician's Elephant"

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Abstract.

Introduction This research investigates Peter Augustus Duchene's journey through Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs in Kate DiCamillo's "The Magician's Elephant."

Problem Statement: The narrative presents the challenge of Peter fulfilling his fundamental human needs through his experiences.

Relevance/Significance of Study Analyzing Peter's Progression through Maslow's Hierarchy offers insights into character development and portrayal of human motivation in the literature.

Purpose of the Research This study aimed to determine how Peter Augustus Duchene meets his physiological, safety, love and belonging, esteem, and self-actualization needs within "The Magician's Elephant."

Research Methodology Employing a library research approach, this study analyzes primary data from the novel alongside secondary sources on Maslow's theory and narrative elements (character, characterization, conflict, setting).

Key Findings: This study reveals Peter's successful fulfillment of physiological, safety, and love and belongingness needs, largely due to the support of the Matienne couple, the fortuneteller, Vilna, and other people in Baltese. Meeting these needs fosters self-esteem and independent decision making, ultimately leading to self-actualization.

State of The Art This study provides a focused analysis of Peter's journey through Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs within the narrative, highlighting the connection between psychological theory and literary character development. Future research could extend this framework to other characters and literary works.

Keywords: Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, The Magician's Elephant, Peter Augustus Duchene, Literary Analysis, Fulfilment of Needs.

1 Introduction

This study investigates the psychological aspects of motivation as depicted in Kate DiCamillo's novel "The Magician's Elephant," focusing on the main character, Peter Augustus Duchene, and his journey to fulfill his needs as outlined by Maslow's hierarchy of needs. This background emphasizes the value of motivation in human behavior and its connection to literature, suggesting that characters' quests for fulfillment mirror real-life experiences. This research aims to address specific problems related to how Peter meets his physiological, safety, love and belongingness, esteem, and self-actualization needs throughout the narrative.

The objective is to provide a comprehensive analysis of Peter's character development through the lens of Maslow's (1970) theory, examining intrinsic elements such as characterization and conflict, as well as the psychological framework of his needs [4]. Previous studies on "The Magician's Elephant" have primarily focused on intrinsic elements, ecocriticism, and sociological perspectives, leaving a gap in psychological analysis. This study aims to fill this gap by offering a novel viewpoint that emphasizes the character's psychological journey, thereby expanding upon existing academic knowledge while maintaining a focus on the psychological dimensions of the narrative. The scope is limited to the psychological framework

of Maslow's hierarchy, analyzing the character's needs within the context of the story and intrinsic elements, including character and characterization, setting, and conflict.

2 Methods

The author collected all the data for this study by consulting the library research method. The initial step in library-based research is to identify pertinent sources that offer factual data or expert opinions on a topic [3]. This approach is a crucial component of various research methods at different stages. The data can be divided into two categories: primary and secondary. Ajayi describes primary data as original information obtained directly by the researcher using procedures such as polls, experiments, survey responses, and observations. In contrast, secondary data consists of information that has already been gathered or created by others, including written materials such as journals, websites, books, and established theories [1]. Kate DiCamillo's "The Magician's Elephant" serves as the main source for this study. Publications, such as books, journals, and research papers, that have addressed this topic in the past constitute secondary data.

According to the study's context, which reveals the main character's psychological experiences in "The Magician's Elephant" by Kate DiCamillo, the author employs psychological technique as the study's extrinsic component. Wellek and Warren define psychology in literature by analyzing psychological characteristics and principles that reflect literary creations [5]. Therefore, the author uses this approach by examining Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs as a part of psychology and connecting it with the main character's story, Peter Augustus Duchene.

3 Result and Discussion

The results discuss the findings in the analysis of Kate DiCamillo's children's book "The Magician's Elephant," with a particular emphasis on Peter Augustus Duchene, the main character. In examining intrinsic elements, the author assesses characters and characterizations, conflicts, and settings. The author will utilize Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs theory, comprising five distinct components: physiological, safety, love and belonging, esteem, and self-actualization, to further explain the extrinsic elements.

3.1 Character and Characterization

This study focuses exclusively on Peter Augustus Duchene, the main character of Kate DiCamillo's *The Magician's Elephant*. Peter, an orphan residing in Baltese, is under the strict guardianship of Vilna Lutz, elderly, duty-bound soldier. Vilna's rigorous upbringing emphasizes discipline and suppresses emotional expression, yet Peter finds crucial emotional support and a sense of community from his compassionate neighbors, Leo and Gloria Matienne.

Peter's character is defined by his unwavering determination and resilience. He relentlessly pursues his goals, as exemplified by his resolve to uncover the truth about his sister, even after being told that she has passed away. "I want to know the truth. And so I will do it." [2]. However, this tenacity can verge the stubbornness. Despite the fortuneteller's assurance that his sister lives and her connection to an elephant, Peter remains steadfast in his belief even when

no elephant is visible in Baltese. "There was no single elephant in sight. However, Peter's stubborn heart is not silenced. It beat out the two simple, impossible words over and over again: *She lives, she lives, she lives.*" [2].

Furthermore, Peter's upbringing instilled a deep aversion to dishonesty in him. He struggles with lying, viewing it as dishonorable, as demonstrated when considering confessing to Vilna about using errand money for the fortuneteller. "Truly, I cannot, for if I do, Vilna Lutz will ask where the money has gone and I will have to lie, and it is a very dishonorable thing to lie." [2]. This commitment to truthfulness extends to his quest for his sister, who vows to remain honorable by not lying. Finally, Vilna's emphasis on duty and discipline cultivated Peter's gentlemanly and respectful demeanors. He consistently treats others with courtesy, which is evident in his polite greetings and respectful gestures, such as removing his hat and bowing to Gloria Matienne. "Good evening, Madam Matienne," [2].

3.2 Setting

The book "The Magician's Elephant" is set in Baltese, a city where Peter and other fictional characters call home, "In the market square of the city of Baltese, there stood a boy with a hat on his head and a coin in his hand" [2]. Peter also lives in a place with his guardian and neighbor, Leo and Gloria Matienne, in Apartment Polonaise, "He squared his shoulder, adjusted his hat, and began the long walk back to the Apartment Polonaise" (DiCamillo, 2009:8). The setting is "at the end of the century before last" [2], specifically in 1899. The story also takes time after a war, as seen in the text by Sister Marie, who remembers a dog named Iddo working to transfer information between officers of Her Majesty's army, "there was a time when he had worked carrying messages and letters and plans across battlefields, transferring information from one officer of Her Majesty's army to another" [2]. This setting influences Peter's journey as it shapes the characters' behavior towards him, such as Vilna Lutz, who is eager to train him to become a soldier.

The social background in the book presents a connected society governed by various figures of power, including nobles, a countess, and soldiers, as seen in this text, "They was all sitting there, the nobility, the ladies and the princes and the princesses, all together in the opera house [2]. Moreover, members of this community are deeply linked, with interactions and relationships affecting one another's lives. This society assisted Peter in discovering the existence of an elephant in the town. It can be seen in this dialogue, "At the sound of the impossible word on the lips of another, he felt a shock travel from the tip of his feet to the top of his head. He stepped backward" [2]. This combination of social intimacy, authority, and magical inquiry creates a rich backdrop for Peter's story.

3.3 Conflict

The story revolves around two internal conflicts and one external conflict. The inner conflict begins when Peter remembers seeing his sister, which leads him to doubt whether she is alive. When a fortuneteller claims her sister is alive, Peter is split between Vilna's claims and the fortuneteller's words, "It is just some Grand and terrible joke that the fortuneteller has told me, my sister is not alive, there is no reason to Hope" [2]. This becomes a psychological and emotional battle with uncertainty, hope, and dread. In the end, Peter chooses to believe that his

sister is alive, as an elephant will lead him to her, "She lives, and an elephant will lead me to her. And because an elephant has come out of nowhere, out of nothing, I believe in her. Not you. I do not, I cannot, any longer believe you" [2]. The tension of uncertainty follows him throughout the story, driving him to search for truth.

External conflict revolves around Peter and Vilna Lutz. Peter remembers happy times spent with his father as a child, leading him to realize the foolishness of soldiering, and for the first time, soldiering did not, in any way, seem like a man's work to Peter. Instead, it seemed like foolishness" [2]. Furthermore, Peter tells Vilna that he believes his sister is alive but faces denial and attempts to convince him again. Vilna admits lying about his sister to protect him from harm: At the end, Vilna admits to Peter that he lied to protect him from the pain of knowing his sister's condition, making him anxious, "You lied to me." "No, no, Private Duchene. I lied for you, to protect you" [2].

3.4 Physiological Needs

According to Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs theory, Peter must meet his basic physiological needs, such as food, air, and a safe place to live. He can accomplish these needs independently, but sometimes he receives help from his guardian, Vilna Lutz, who looks after him, and his neighbors, the Matienne couple. These fundamental needs allow Peter to focus on other important things in his life and start his journey towards reaching full potential.

Peter's need for air and sleep is one of the first actions he can accomplish alone. He usually has no problem satisfying his human need for air, which involves breathing, such as when he wants to discuss about his sister with Leo, "Peter stopped. He took a deep breath." (DiCamillo, 2009:140). However, at one moment, Peter experiences difficulty breathing due to a sign outside the fortuneteller's tent that promises to answer any question a customer has, no matter how hard, and all it takes is one florit. This sign triggered Peter's nerves and made it difficult for him to breathe. "The audacity of the words, their dizzying promise, made it difficult, suddenly, him to breathe" [2]. Moreover, Peter is able to sleep and dream about his past with his entire family until he wakes. "Peter dreamed" [2]. Peter sleeps and dreams of his past with his entire family until he awakens and realizes that it is not merely a dream but a memory. "When he woke from this dream, Peter sat up straight and looked around the dark room" [2].

In addition to fulfilling his physiological needs independently, Peter also receives assistance from his guardian and neighbor, the Vilna and Matienne couple. Vilna assists him in providing shelter in Apartment Polonaise, a residence to which he consistently returns. Vilna also assists him in fulfilling his food needs by consuming small fish and nearly expired bread, this can be seen in this dialogue when Gloria asks Peter, "Does that old man not feed you?" [2]. Peter denies it and tells Gloria that Vilna actually feeds him with small fish and bread. "There is bread," said Peter. "And also fish, but they are very small fish, exceedingly small" [2]. However, this quantity is insufficient for Peter to be considered successful in satisfying his hunger.

Leo and Gloria Matienne contribute to Peter's care by providing him with enjoyable, nutritious cuisine, "Peter raised the spoon to his lips. He chewed. He swallowed" [2]. In the quotation, Peter only receives a proper meal at the Matienne couple's house: "It had been a long time

since he had eaten anything besides tiny fish and old bread” [2]. In contrast, when he is with Vilna, he can barely satisfy his physiological needs with adequate food to fill his stomach, as he only receives bread and the smallest fish in the market. In conclusion, Peter's journey towards reaching his full potential is influenced by his ability to meet his basic physiological needs and by the support of his guardian and neighbors.

3.5 Safety Needs

Peter raised by his guardian, Vilna Lutz, provides him with a sense of safety and stability. Living with Vilna Lutz offers him a consistent place to sleep and a routine, which contributes to his sense of security, "The boy's name was Peter Augustus Duchene, and the coin that he held did not belong to him but was instead the property of his guardian, an old soldier named Vilna Lutz" [2]. Being with Leo and Gloria Matienne also provided Peter with genuine security. They provide a reliable presence when Peter needs them by saying “don’t worry Peter” [2]. Leo permits Peter to express his thoughts attentively while listening. As Peter eats at Matienne’s unit, Leo takes a seat in the chair next to Peter and expresses that it is time for him to share all the details, “start at the beginning” [2]. The small gesture from Leo and Gloria reassures Peter that he is safe from them.

Moreover, Peter initially experiences emotional insecurity due to his obedience towards Vilna and a lack of information about his sister's status. However, his encounters with the fortune-teller transformed everything. Peter's unwavering belief in his sister's existence, driven by his vague memories and the fortuneteller's pronouncement, serves as a powerful anchor against his emotional insecurity. “Her? Your sister? That is your question? Very well. She lives.” [2]. The fortuneteller instructs Peter to follow the elephant, stating that she will lead him. In disbelief, Peter states that there is no elephant in Baltese, but the fortuneteller gives a statement that instills hope and purpose, counteracting the uncertainty surrounding his past and future. “That is surely the truth, at least for now. But perhaps you have not noticed: the truth is forever changing” [2]. This internal strength, Peter nurtures and clings, leads to a more stable emotional security.

In summary, Peter's safety needs are met by his guardians, neighbors, and fortunetellers. These support systems help Peter maintain a sense of stability and comfort even when faced with emotional insecurity.

3.6 Love and Belonging Needs

Peter primarily satisfies his love and belongingness needs through memories he creates when his parents are still alive, the love and sincerity he receives from the Matienne Couple, and a sense of belonging through his bond with the elephant.

Peter's love from family is showed in his childhood memories of being a small child in a garden with a bright atmosphere. His father joyfully tosses him into the air and catches him each time. Peter's mother playfully warns his father not to drop him. “Don’t you dare drop him” [2]. Peter’s father said that he would not drop his son and stated a heartwarming sentence as a father. “I could not. For he is Peter Augustus Duchene, and he will always return to me.” [2]. He remembers that beautiful memory, but sadly, returns to reality, where he is alone and

lives with a cold guardian towards him. Therefore, Peter feels that it is essential to trust the fortuneteller. He believed that the elephant could guide him to her lost sister. Thus, to some degree, the belief that her sister is still alive reminds him of the love he receives from his family.

Peter also fulfills his love and belongingness through Leo, a reliable friend who helps him find the lost sister of the elephant. Leo affectionately calls Peter the "little cuckoo bird of the attic world" [2], highlighting their close bond and Leo's playful, nurturing attitude. When Leo shares the details about the elephant's public display, it reflects his desire to ensure Peter experiences joy and excitement, "you may see her this Saturday, Peter, this Saturday." "Oh," said Peter, "I will see her. I will find her!" His face suddenly became bright" [2]. Leo and Gloria Matienne are also concerned about Peter's condition and empathize with him. The peak of the Matienne couple's love is when Gloria hugs Peter, who has never been hugged after a very long time, "she grabbed him and pulled him close, enveloping him in the smell of mutton stew and starch and green grass" [2]. This surprising action causes Peter to cry and Gloria offers him comfort. "There, you foolish, beautiful boy who wants to change the world. There, there. And who could keep you from loving you? Who could keep from loving a boy so brave and true?" [2].

Furthermore, in the novel, Peter encounters the elephant he has been searching for, and asks her to show him how to find his lost sister. Their meeting unexpectedly created a bond that Peter had never anticipated, leading him to care deeply for the elephant. At that moment, he seems to forget everything. "She was heartbroken. She must go home. The elephant must go home or she would surely die" [2]. This part shows that Peter had built a sense of belonging in which he thinks the elephant's condition is similar to his, and he does not want the elephant to experience the same life. Peter expresses his gratitude and cares about the elephant until it is time for the elephant to leave. He gently touches the elephant and allows her to rest for a moment, telling her he is sorry, feels thankful, and finally greets her with "Thank you, and goodbye" [2].

3.7 Esteem Needs

Peter's early life, characterized by the absence of his parents and his existence as an orphan under the care of a reserved Vilna Lutz, contributes to his low self-esteem. Peter's low self-esteem is shaped by his lack of warmth towards Vilna, who is harsh towards him. This lack of warmth leads to doubts and discouragement in believing that his sister is alive. This low self-esteem shows in the quotation, "Peter had a terrible feeling that the whole of his life had been nothing but standing and knocking, asking to be let into some place that he was not even certain existed" [2]. However, the yearning for his sister transforms into a desire for companionship and a deep-seated need to establish a fundamental connection. After deciding to find his sister, Peter feels better about himself and gains the support of others who help him meet his needs. As he continues his search, he meets more people who believe in him, helping him feel as though he can do things on his own.

In Chapter 9, Peter demonstrates his ability to speak for himself and defends his beliefs in front of Vilna. He tells Vilna that he does not want to be a soldier, "I am done, too, with being a soldier, because soldiering is a useless and pointless thing" [2], Peter also insists on finding the elephant and their sister the next day. "Tomorrow I will go to the elephant and then I will find

my sister and I will be done with you" [2]. Despite Vilna's pressure, he chose a path that aligns with his desires. Peter remains loyal to his sister Adele's memories even when others question their validity. After Vilna confesses lying about her, Peter decides to continue his search by trusting his inner voice.

Peter's faith in the magician who brings the elephant to Baltese is evident when he believes he can send the elephant back home despite the magician's broken magic. "I believe that things can still be set right. I believe that you can perform the necessary magic" [2]. This develops trust in his intuition and emotions, which are essential for overcoming insecurity stemming from an unknown origin. Furthermore, the reunion with Adele is a significant event in meeting Peter's esteem requirements. This validates his long-held opinions and doubts, and when an elephant appears in Baltese, Peter has a slight hope to trust the fortuneteller's statement more than Vilna. The journey with the elephant and his resilience provided Peter with a profound sense of achievement. "He laughed and turned. "Leo Matienne," he shouted, "this is my sister!" [2].

Finally, having a family and feeling loved by his sister Adele strengthened his sense of worth. From the journey of Peter and the elephant, he gained a new status within the community, which contributed to his sense of worth. "And some small evidence of these marvelous events remains. High atop the city's most magnificent cathedral, hidden among the glowering and resentful gargoyles, there is a carving of an An elephant led by a boy. The boy is carrying a girl, and one of his hands is resting on the elephant, while behind the elephant, there is a magician and a policeman, a nun and a noblewoman, a manservant, a beggar, a dog, and finally, behind them all, at the end, a small bent man" [2].

3.8 Self-Actualization

Peter's journey towards self-actualization is marked by his determination and unwavering belief in his sister, Adele. He reunites with her, demonstrating responsibility as a brother and son and his acceptance of his own values.

"His heart leaped up high inside him, astonished and overjoyed anew at the sight of her, and he remembered, again, the door from his dream and the golden field of wheat. All that light, and here was Adele before him: warm, safe, and loved. It was, after all, as he had once promised his mother, it would be" [2].

This reunion serves as a reminder of what he lost and what he resolved to bring back. Furthermore, Peter's deep love for his sister and his determination to pursue her became a central purpose in his life. His empathy and connections are evident in his interactions with others during the journey. He expresses remorse for the elephant he brought home but also manages to convince people in Baltese to participate in the magic performed by a magician. Its shows in this text.

The metre walked in front of the elephant. He carried Adele. Peter then walked with Leo Matienne. Behind the elephant was Madam LaVaughn in her wheelchair, pushed by Hans Ickman, who was, in turn, followed by Bartok Whynn, and behind him was the beggar, Tomas,

with Iddo at his heels. At the very end was Sister Marie, who for the first time in 50 years was not at the door of the Orphanage of the Sisters of Perpetual Light. Peter led them” [2].

Throughout his journey, Peter finds fulfillment with individuals who provide him with stability and affection, such as Leo, Gloria, and Adele. He now has a clear picture of where he truly belongs and can accept his past and live today. In conclusion, Peter's journey towards self-actualization is driven by his determination, commitment, and support of those around him. His search for his sister serves as a motivation to develop a stronger sense of self through purpose, competence, and establishing a core family connection.

4 Conclusion

This thesis examines the journey of Peter Augustus Duchene in Kate DiCamillo's "The Magician's Elephant," using Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory. The story revolves around an orphan, Peter Augustus Duchene, who is impoverished and cared for by a cruel soldier, Vilna. Peter meets a fortuneteller in Baltese who tells him his sister is still alive and instructs him to follow an elephant to find Adele. Despite initial skepticism, Peter embarks on the quest to find his sister. His empathy for the elephant inspired him to return to its natural habitat, leading him to reunite with his sister. The extrinsic elements of this thesis explore Peter's fulfillment of his five basic needs: physiological needs, safety needs, love and belongingness needs, esteem needs, and self-actualization needs. The results show that Peter was able to meet his basic, safety, and love and belonging needs by himself and with the help of Vilna, Leo, Gloria, and people in Baltese. He also fulfills his self-esteem needs by choosing what he truly wants and learning to trust himself. Peter's fulfillment of the hierarchy of needs results in satisfaction, unity, and personal development, as he matures into a person who fulfills his goals, is genuine to himself, and believes in himself.

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