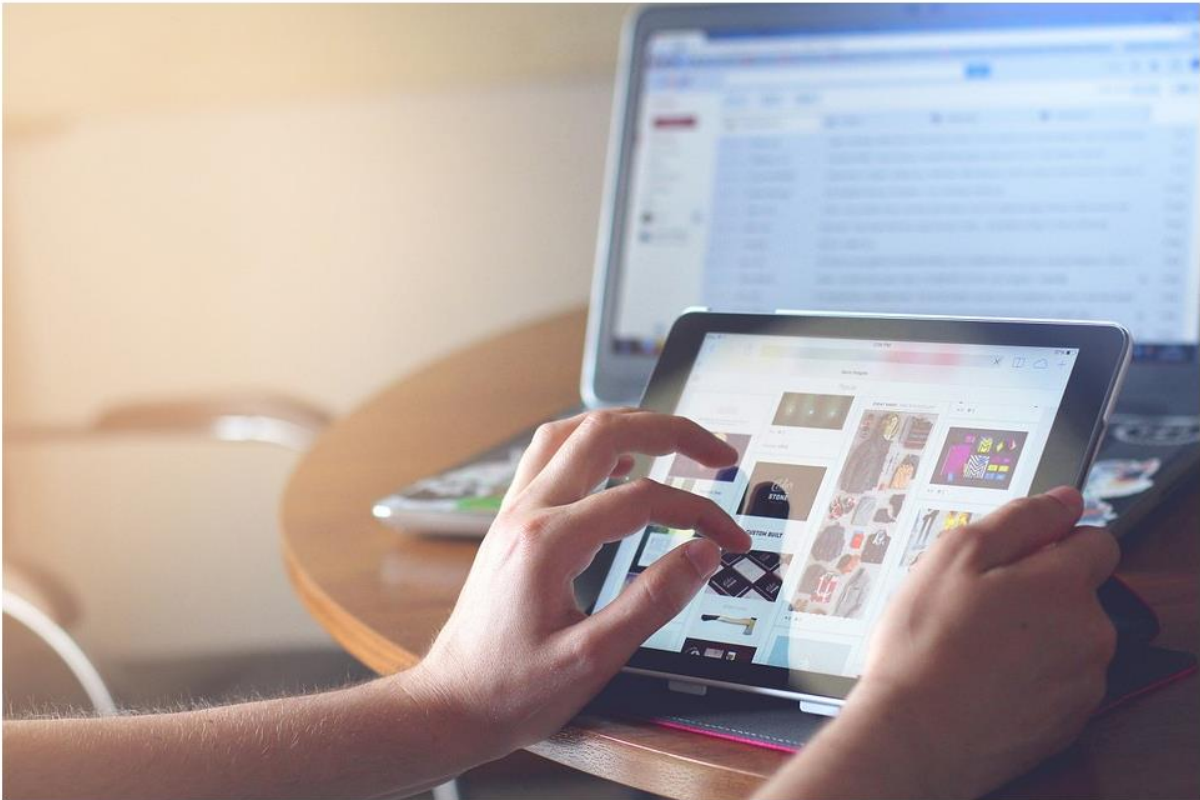


ISSN : 2395 – 5155

**IJOHMN**

**International Journal online of Humanities**



**Volume 4, Issue 6, December 2018**

**[www.ijohmn.com](http://www.ijohmn.com)**

Muhammad Javaid Anwar

(Govt. of Punjab Education Department, Vehari)

[Raojavaid96@gmail.com](mailto:Raojavaid96@gmail.com)

Basri Sattar

(Punjab Group of Colleges, Vehari)

[Basrisattar1991@gmail.com](mailto:Basrisattar1991@gmail.com)

**MASLOW'S HIERARCHY OF NEEDS IN "BUTTON BUTTON" BY RICHARD  
MATHESON**



COMSATS UNIVERSITY OF ISLAMABAD (CUI) , VEHARI CAMPUS

2018

**MASLOW'S HIERARCHY OF NEEDS IN "BUTTON BUTTON" BY RICHARD  
MATHESON**

**1. ABSTRACT**

A short stories author and novelists named Richard Matheson was born on 1926 in US state New Jersey. Story writer Richard Matheson is best known for his science fiction's works. His first story was "Born Man and Woman." He also earned a good name for his popular fiction "I am Legend" as well as due to short story "Button Button" He passed away on June 23, 2013 (Editors, 2014). Alike various famous novelists and story writers Matheson also leave a deep impression of his readers. He also turned minor incidents and situations into extraordinary situations.

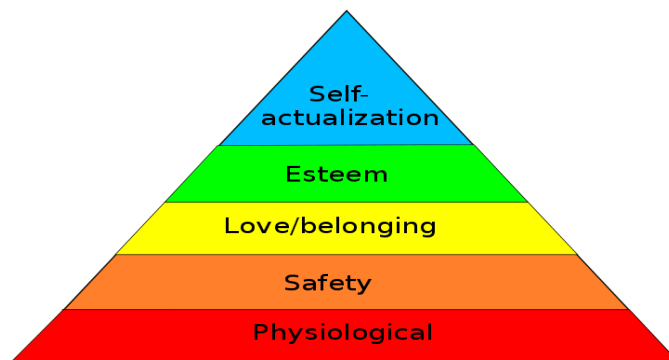
Matheson's short story named "Button Button" is a great example of Matheson somewhat good quality of work. This story also contains real ideas of one's life, those who sees it or reads it get involve with characters. The researchers analyses the natural instincts, needs, safety etc of the characters by the application of Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory. The major concerns of the researchers are to interpret the human needs in the light of Maslow's theory.

**KEY WORDS:** "Button Button" short story, Maslow hierarchy of needs

## 2. INTRODUCTION

The short story "Button Button" first got published in "Playboy", June 1970. In the real story, the plot presented differently. Norma the heroine of the short story presses the button for money and gets money after the tragic death of her husband Arthur. The important thing is that the money was not reward for pushing the button instead it was insurance payment (Reid, 2008). The analysis of this research focuses on the Norma's major needs through Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs theory. The analysis of this article shows that Norma tries to get and fulfill her basic needs. According to this theory one's can interpret that human safety is stronger than the love needs. In this way psychological needs of human beings are stronger than safety needs which are stronger than love needs, which are stronger than the esteem needs, which are stronger than idiosyncratic needs we have called the needs for self actualization (Maslow, 1970:56).

Classification of human needs best exemplifies through pyramid graph such as given below:



## 3. Research Questions:

1. What is Hierarchy of needs?
2. How Richard Matheson depicts the theory of Maslow's hierarchy of needs in his short story "Button Button".

#### 4. Objectives of the Study

1. The students will be able to know about Richard Matheson
2. The students will also be able to know about the short story of "*Button Button*"  
by Matheson
3. The students will improve their understanding about the theory of Maslow's  
Hierarchy of needs.

## 5. Findings

Maslow's order of necessities is a persuasive hypothesis in brain research including a five-level model of human needs, regularly portrayed as progressive dimensions inside a pyramid. From the base of the progressive system upwards, the necessities are: physiological, security, love and having a place, regard and self-realization. Needs let down in the chain of command must be fulfilled before people can take care of requirements higher up. This five-organize model can be separated into lack needs and development needs. The initial four dimensions are regularly alluded to as inadequacy needs (D-needs), and the best dimension is known as development or being needs (B-needs) (Saul McLeod, 2018)

The short story, "Button Button" by Matheson describes Norma's decision making for money as well as for better life. Norma as a house wife starts to put forward her arguments for getting money, nice apartment, cottage car and visit to Europe. After encountering by arguments she reaches to conclusion and she got back unit button and presses. In consequences her husband dies and she gets money of insurance policy. Norma tries to fulfill her basic psychological needs that can be seen through the given below quotes from the text:

"It could prove very valuable," he (Mr. Steward) told her.

"*Monetarily?*" she (Norma) challenged. Mr. Steward nodded.

"Monetarily," he said. (Matheson, 1970, p. 103:104)

The above lines from the text describes how Norma the protagonist of the short story is interested in money for fulfilling the psychological needs of living a standard life.

Another line from text to show her concern for physiological needs can be seen from:

"Fifty thousand dollars, Arthur." "What has the amount-

“*Fifty thousand dollars, Arthur,*” Norma interrupted. “A chance to take that trip to Europe we've always talked about.” “Norma, no.” “A chance to buy that cottage on the island.” (Matheson, 1970, p. 103:08)

These lines from the text also shows Norma concerns for fulfilling psychological needs such as getting food, clothing and shelter by pressing the unit button. The ways she chooses is not morally good but by doing so she wants to satisfy her psychological needs.

For the next stage of needs safety, Norma’s attempt to satisfy these types of needs can be seen from:

"Well, I *wasn't*. When I talked about Europe, a cottage on the island-" "Norma, why are we getting so involved in this? ""m not involved at all." She drew in a shaking breath. ""m simply trying to indicate that-" "*What?*" "That I'd like for *us* to go to Europe. Like for *us* to have a cottage on the island. Like for *us* to have a nicer apartment, nicer furniture, nicer clothes, a car. Like for us to finally have a *baby*, for that matter." (Matheson, 1970, p. 103:109)

The above lines from short story happen when Norma feels uncomfortable from fears and doubt for leaving her secure life. Alike various people in this universe, Norma feels the needs for safety when her future life seems to be unsure. So, she thinks that by doing so she can satisfy her needs for safety.

Norma’s later stage of needs, the needs for love and belongings can be illustrated through this line from text:

“I think you felt” -she gestured again-“that I was only thinking of myself.” (Matheson, 1970, p. 109)

The above line shows Norma’s love for her husband. She said that I’m not selfish literally meaning I just not think about myself rather I think about you too because I do love you.

Another quotation that shows his needs for love and belonging appears in:

"That I'd like for *us* to go to Europe. Like for *us* to have a cottage on the island. Like for *us* to have a nicer apartment, nicer furniture, nicer clothes, a car. Like for us to finally have a *baby*, for that matter." (Matheson, 1970, p. 103:109)

In the above text, Norma shows her longing to fulfill her love and belonging needs. At this spot, she depicts dominant needs for love and belongings.

The next stage of needs, the needs for esteem, is also experienced by Santiago. What he experiences can be seen from the quote below:

“She stared at it for a long time before taking the key from its envelope and removing the glass dome. She stared at the button. How ridiculous, she thought. All this furor over a meaningless button.” (Matheson, 1970, p. 110)

In these lines, Norma attempts to depict herself as an adult who can take her own decision. She wants others to see her as a woman able of taking her own decision without interrupting by anyone. This is the signs of the demonstration of his needs for esteem.



The last stage of needs, the needs for self actualization in Norma's character can be seen through:

“Reaching out, she pressed it down. For *us*, she thought angrily. She shuddered. Was it *happening*? A chill of horror swept across her. In a moment, it had passed. She made a contemptuous noise. *Ridiculous*, she thought. To get so worked up over nothing.”

In the end of the story, Norma presses the button for the sake of money itself. She does not press the button because she has to but because she wants to. This reveals that she starts to clear her needs for self actualization. She knows that what she does is something that will express her real self.

## 6. Conclusion

Form the above findings, it can be stated that out of the five stages in Maslow's hierarchy of human needs, the heroine of the story, Norma apparent and attempts to satisfy her needs in all five levels of the hierarchy of needs.

### Work Cited

Abrams, M.H, 1999. *Glossary of Literary Terms*. Thomson Learning Publisher.

Editors, B. (2014). *Richard Matheson Biography*. Retrieved from The Biography.com website:  
A&E Television Networks: <https://www.biography.com/people/richard-matheson-21265767>

Maslow, Abraham Harold. 1943. *A Theory of Human Motivation*.

Maslow, Abraham Harold. 1954. *Motivation and Personality*. New York: Harper and Row New York.

Matheson, R. (1970). *Button Button*. Gauntlet Press.: TorBooks paperback edition.

McLeod, S. A. (2018, May 21). *Maslow's hierarchy of needs*. Retrieved from <https://www.simplypsychology.org/maslow.html>

Reid, C. (2008). *The Short Review*. Retrieved from Button Button by Richard Mathson:Torbooks paperbacks: <http://www.theshortreview.com/reviews/RichardMathesonButtonButton.htm>