

# Kennedy's Blog

Wednesday, 22 January 2014

## Hierarchy of Needs

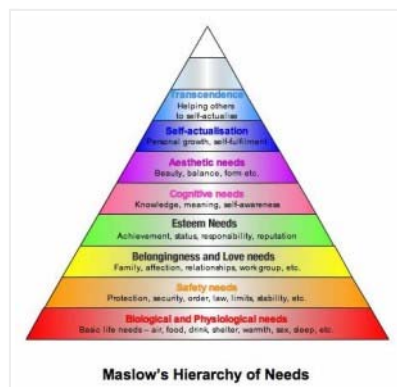
Aminata's longing for a home and a sense of belonging were discussed frequently throughout the novel. One example of this longing is on page 468, when Aminata is talking with Armstrong.

"And now you want to go home?' He said.

'It's what I've always wanted, from the moment I was taken.'"

In our seminars, we discussed Aminata's desperate need for her home, for a place to belong. This brought us to discuss Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs. I was not familiar with this psychological theory, so I've dedicated this blog post to research on Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs.

The Hierarchy of Needs (image to the right) was first purposed by Abraham Maslow in his 1943 paper "A Theory of Human Motivation". Humans begin by attempting to fill the first level of the pyramid, which are the basic biological and physiological needs of life. Once that level is filled, the human moves onto the next level. Aminata is constantly searching for a place to belong. It seems that she is stuck on the third level.



The Love and Belonging (third) level the next important need to safety and survival because humans are social creatures. We need people in our lives to share love and affection. This includes friendship, intimacy and a desire to have a family. This is also referred to as the social need. If this level is not filled, many people become susceptible to loneliness, social anxiety and depression.

Near the end of the novel, she finally let's go of her dream of going back to Bayo. "I let go of my greatest desire. I would never go back home. [...] Bayo, I could live without. But for freedom, I would die." (pp. 494-495) At his point, it seems she has moved past the Belonging and Love level of the Hierarchy, knowing that people do love her and she belongs to 'the traveling people'. This leads me to believe that she is, in fact, in or passing the self-actualization level. As she has all of the requirements for esteem needs, cognitive needs and aesthetic needs.

All information on Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs was found on <http://www.maslowshierarchyofneeds.net/>

Posted by **Kennedy** at 08:21

Recommend this on Google

Labels: **Book of Negroes**

### Blog Archive

- ▼ **2014** (7)
  - **April** (1)
  - **March** (5)
  - ▼ **January** (1)
    - [Hierarchy of Needs](#)
- **2013** (6)

### About Me

**Kennedy**

[View my complete profile](#)

## 2 comments:

**Lea Mueller** 24 April 2014 at 11:54

I used the Hierarchy of Needs by Maslow for my seminar too. I think Aminata is indeed a very good example for someone who is on her way to achieve the needs in life. Her wish to live at home with her own happy family symbolizes her need for love and affection. I find your point that she archived the self-actualization level very interesting. However, I am not sure if she actually archived this level because she does not have loved people around her and actually does not happen to be where she always wanted to be, at her home. It seems to me that Aminata feels a little bit lonely at the end when she is in cold London. On the other hand I agree with you because she reunites with her daughter and can finally write down her story. She can put her name on the book and say what she had to endure her whole life. What are your thoughts? Could you specify hwy you think she has passed the self-actualization level?

[Reply](#)[Replies](#)**Kennedy** 25 April 2014 at 06:59

Hi Lea, I think that for most of the Book of Negroes she was missing the 3rd level (belonging and love) and this is what drove her to return to Bayo, because that was the only place that she remembers the feeling of home. But when she returns to Africa, she begins to second guess Bayo- she questions the slaves the people of Bayo used and thinks about how things would be different from how she remembers them. She misses the feelings of love, not the actual geographic location of Bayo. One of my favourite songs says, "You're already home where you feel loved" (the Head and the Heart- Lost in my mind) and I think that wherever she is with her daughter, she will be at home because she finally has someone that she loves and that loves her back.

[Reply](#)

Enter your comment...

Comment as: Select profile...▼

Publish

Preview

[Newer Post](#)[Home](#)[Older Post](#)Subscribe to: [Post Comments \(Atom\)](#)