

**Analysis of Three Dimensions of Characters in a Teenager Movie:
*Mean Girls***

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Abstract

Using descriptive-qualitative method type of research, the analysis is conducted with a purpose of finding out the true depth of the characters using the three dimensions of characters theory by Lajos Egri which covers the aspects of physiological, psychological and sociological dimension. Having done the analysis, it can be concluded that the character Cady Heron, physically appears to be sexy, nice-looking and genuinely pious girl lives around a positive atmosphere. It all changed when she began to hang out with meanest charcater in the movie, Regina George that ingrainly vicious deep inside but she still managed to be idolized by people because of her glamorous life. Physiologically, Regina is pretty, skinny and dressed georgously. Psychologycally, she is mean, she has way worse personality than what is shown. Sociologically, Regina’s life is dreamed by many girls, she is famous, rich, and living glamorously.

INTRODUCTION

Movies have always been one of the most common entertainment among human. The never ending existence of people’s interest in movies makes it developed along in every era.

One of the essential components of movies is the characters. Characters are certainly the main medium for moviemakers or authors to deliver the intention and imagination of the movie itself to the audience, because characters carry the movie through the conversations or actions they took in the movie. Characters are the internal structure of a movie (Kenney, 1966).

Literature is an art that represents ‘life’ by means of literature covers the social reality of the real world (Warren R. W., 1967). As characters in movies are

more likely to be taken from a reflection of human characteristics in real life (Murphy, 2015, p. 13). A character can be so phenomenal that their legacy is still exist and people keep remembering their actions after years of its release. One of the movies that has phenomenal characters is a 2000s teenage movie called *Mean Girls*. This movie is nothing but a reflection of teenagers of the era.

Human characters are divided into three dimensional aspects. They are physiological, psychological and sociological dimensions of character (Egri, 2009, p. 89). Illustrating the view of the author’s imagination and delivering it in the best way possible is very much needed especially in a movie. How the script is written must have good details for the actors to play the

characters exactly as how the author's imagination in the first place.

Main characters in movies are a very important essentials, it is dominant and high intensity in building the story and it usually complex and fully developed (Grill, 1995). In order to picture a good character, it must followed by an understanding of the character physiologically (Frey, 2010). This covers the character's appearance. Then followed by its sociological dimension that covers their social life such as parents, friends, where they go to school, etc. and last but not least, the psychological dimension. Within the psychological dimension there are phobias and manias, complexes, fears, inhibitions, patterns of guilt and longing, fantasies and so on. The psychological dimension includes such things as IQ, aptitudes, special abilities, habits, irritability, sensibility, talents, and likes and dislikes (Frey, 2010). This study aims at elaborating the three dimensional character by Lajos Egri (1960) supported with the method of characterization according to Kenney (1966) that is used by the author of the movie, *Mean Girls*.

A previous study was done by Sangastu (2018) with title *The Analysis of Three Dimension Aspects of the Main Character in the Novel The Short Second Life of Bree Tanner*. The study used the theory of characterization according to Kenney (1966), the method of dramatic and character on other character type of characterization. The study found that the main character, Bree was physiologically described as a fifteen year old girl whose life changed when she became a vampire, her physical appearance changed when she became a vampire. She sparks like crystals when her body meets the sunlight. In the dimension of psychology, she is genuinely introverted, she is not open about her self to others. In sociological dimension of character, when she was a human, she lived with

her father, but her relationship with her father adverse when her mother died.

Study about three dimensional character was also done by Sawitri (2016) with a title of *Method of Characterization and Three Dimensional Aspects of Main Character in Bronte's Jane Eyre*. The study was also using the method of characterization by Kenney (1966) and supported by the theory of three dimensional character according to Lajos Egri in the book of I Made Sukada (1978). Using descriptive-qualitative type of research, the study found that the main character was described in using mixed method which is dramatic and character on other character type of method.

A study about three dimensional character by Maharani (2020) with title *the Three Dimensional Aspects of the Main Character of the Great Gatsby*. The study used an observation method to collect the data and also note-taking as the technique of the research. The study found that the main character in the *Great Gatsby* in psychological dimension is an elegant person, around thirty and appears to be handsome. In sociological aspects, Jay Gatsby has a reputable status and is wealthy. Moreover, in psychological dimension, Jay Gatsby is a narcissist and is ambitious, he always makes sure to get what he wants and even about love.

Study by Utama (2018) with title of *Characterization and Three Dimensions of the Main Character in the Movie Looking For Alaska*. The study used documentation and library research as the method of research. the study aimed at finding out how the author presents the main character of *Looking for Alaska* in the aspects of physiological, psychological and sociological dimensions of character. The study also used the characterization theory by Kenney (1966) and find out that the characters are shaped through mixing method of characterization.

Another study of three dimensions of character is done by Wibawa (2021) with title of Main Character in *Kung Fu Panda a Movie* by Eithan Reiff and Cyrous Voris. The study done by doing observation by watching the movie and note-taking techniques. The study found that physiologically, the main character is described as a big fat panda and in psychological aspect, the main character is not easy to give up in fulfilling his destiny and in sociological aspect, the main character is son of a ramen noodle seller which is financially he is average and somewhat his destiny demanded him to become a warrior dragon.

Character and Characterization

Characters are essential in movies. According to Stanford, (2006), character is a fictional subject or people that takes action in the literary work. Characters are divided into major and minor characters. Major characters that are known as main characters are the one that brings the plot and story of the movie and hold huge impact. Meanwhile, minor characters are the supportive ones, more secondary and whose function is partly to illuminate the major characters. Klarer (1999) stated that character as a figure presented in literary work, including main character or protagonist and minor character. Minor characters are categorized as flat characters and unchanging, they remain the same from the beginning of a work to the end. character is also divided into static and dynamic character. Static type of characters are the ones that completely the same from beginning until end, where there is no conflict that changed them. Moreover, dynamic characters are the one that changed in personality, looks and characteristics at the end of the movie because of conflicts (DiYanni, 2001).

Characterization is a practical method of person in a narrative and dramatic work (Baldick, 2001). This denotes the direct method of characterization such as commentary made in the literature and attribution of qualities in description. Moreover, the indirect method is to build the implication of the characters through reading or recognizing the character's actions and valued them by the provided evidence.

METHOD AND THEORY

Research method is the elaboration of how the researcher making the analysis. The fundamental of a research method is a scientific way of gaining data for particular uses and goals (Sugiyono, 2013).

The research design of this study is a descriptive-qualitative type of research methodology, since this study has a purpose of understanding and describing a certain phenomenon which happens to the object that is going to be analyzed and being observed in its natural contexts. The descriptive study will be used to gain particular information about a certain phenomenon which happens when the study is conducted.

The source data for this study is from a movie, *Mean Girls*. This movie was written by Tina Fey and it was released in 2014. This movie is considered to be a phenomenal movie among the teenagers of the 2000s because of the main characters' actions and personalities. It is considered to be relatable to the teenagers for the plots and the characters.

The data are collected by first, taking notes of certain utterances made by the main characters in the movie then followed by documentation in this research which was carried out by watching the movie to find the data to be analyzed. Then, finding and determining certain conversations that is made in the

movie can be used as a data source in the study. The data are chosen by doing a non-probability purposive data sampling where the data are considered by the researcher through some judgments on whether the data is qualified in fulfilling the criteria to be a data source (Dudovskiy, 2016).

The data that are collected in which are considered to have the potential in supporting the analysis were analyzed using the three dimensional characters by Lajos Egri. the three dimensions of characters are the physiological dimension which is a dimension of the human body, the psychological dimension includes human motivation, emotion and feeling (Bernhardt, 1953) and the sociological dimension which is study of human beings and socials relationships with groups, the part the character took in the society, etc. (Warren J. S., 1965) and also supported by using the theory of characterization according to Kenney (1966).

The analyzed data are provided in using the descriptive-qualitative type of methodology. The data is presented by first elaborating the transcript of the conversation that are made in the movie that is considered to have potential as the source data and in paragraphs of explanation, where the conversations were taken from. All of the data presented by markings of code in numbers accordingly.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This study found that the main characters of the movie Mean Girls named Cady Heron and Regina George both personalities are diversely described in the movie. The analysis is using the three dimensional aspect of character by Egri (1960) and the method of characterization by Kenney (1966). The three dimensional aspects of characters were all described using the dramatic and

character on other characters method of characterization. Dramatic method is where the character explains their persona by the utterances that are said on their own, while character on other characters is a description of a character said by other characters.

Moreover, the three dimensional aspect of character cover the dimension of physiology which is a description of the character physically such as their gender, age, body shape, etc. One of the characters, Regina George physically pictured as a female character, her body is skinny and she wears glamorous thing that boosted her appearance. The dimension of psychology is a reflection of the physiology dimension, whether if the appearance of the character effects their psychology. Regina George is described as a pretty girl, this could be one of the reasons for her mean actions that she made in the movie. Lastly, the sociological dimension of character, which is the reflection of the other two earlier dimensions. The sociological dimension covers the social life of the character such as the family, schools and status in the society. Regina George grew up with a wealthy family, she is used to expensive things spread around her. She is also a popular girl in her society.

Three Dimensions of Characters

a. Physiological Dimension

Physiological dimensional character is a condition in which focus or highlights the physical appearance of one. For like their age, gender, and any physical signification of the character. How the physiological dimensional character is defined in the movie.

Data 1

GIRL: *Regina George is flawless*

The first data was said by a girl supporting character. The utterance was

about her describing one of the main characters, Regina George. In this utterance, she mentioned Regina as a flawless girl that implying Regina physically appeared to be adored by other girls

Data 2

GIRL: One time she met John Stamos on a plane and he told her she is pretty

On data number 2, the utterance was made by a girl supporting character, this is using the character on other characters method of characterization. In this utterance, the speaker is talking about Regina George, the use of pronoun 'she' is describing Regina's gender which is female. The speaker is also experience, she testified that Regina once met an actor and he told Regina that she is pretty. This also proves that Regina physically appears as a nice-looking girl.

Data 3

DAMIAN: That's why her hair is so big, it's full of secrets

The third data is using character on other characters type of characterization. Damian is talking about Gretchen Wieners, which is one of the mean girls' members. In this utterance, Damian mentioned that Gretchen's hair is big as in thick.

Data 4

CADY: Regina is like a barbie doll I never had. I never seen somebody so glamorous

Data number 4 is an utterance made by another main character, Cady Heron. This is also a character on other characters method of characterization. In this utterance, Cady is describing the appearance of Regina George at the first day they met. Cady addressed Regina is

like a real-life barbie that everything about her is glamorous.

Data 5

REGINA: I really want to lose 3 pounds

GRETCHEN: What? No OMG you're so skinny

Data number 5, proves that Regina is physically skinny. This can be seen by how shocked Gretchen was when Regina mentioned that she wanted to lose three pounds because she is indeed already skinny.

Data 6

JASON: That cady girl is hot. She might've been hotter than Regina George.

On data number 6 is also using a character on other characters type of method. The utterance was talking about the main character, Cady Heron. The character, Jason said that Cady physically appears to be sexy and she even can be considered to be hotter than Regina.

b. Psychological Dimension

This part of the division of dimensional characters is dealing with the character's emotional state, behavior and personality.

Data 1

DAMIEN. You're taking 12-grade calculus?

CADY: "yeah"

DAMIEN: "Ew why?"

CADY: "Because it's the same in every country"

DAMIEN: "that's beautiful. Wow! This girl is deep"

From the first data, it can be assumed that one of the main characters named Cady Heron is a nice girl. She is a geek that is loving and good at

mathematics. Cady is also a smart girl and good at words. This can be seen by the reaction of surprised by character Damien when he said that she is deep. Deep as in the meaning of that Cady speaks in metaphoric expressions.

Data 2

JANIS: "An evil takes a human body. That's Regina George. Don't be fool because she may seem like a typical selfish back-stabbing, slut-face-hoe-back but in reality she is more than that."

The passage above is Janis' description of one of the main character, Regina George. In her description of Regina, Janis mentioned that Regina is a crafty girl. She is eviler than how she looks on the outside. Janis described Regina in such detail to emphasize how evil Regina's personality is.

Data 3

JANIS: She is fabulous. But, she is evil.

Despite all of the bad and evil personality of Regina's, Janis still considers her as a fabulous girl. She might not look as dangerous on the outside as how she really is. She managed to cover it up by the charm that she has.

Data 4

REGINA: It's kinda cute actually. She's like a little girl, she likes to write all over her notebook "Mrs. Aaron Samuels" and she made a t-shirt that says "I love Aaron" and use it in her underwear. I'm not saying that she's a stalker but she saves this Kleenex tissue you used and said she's gonna do some African voodoo with it to make you like her. I know she is kind of socially retarded and weird but she's my friend. So, just promise me you won't make fun of her.

On data number 4, the utterance was said by a character named Regina George. The setting of this monologue of hers is that she was talking to her ex-boyfriend in who Cady Heron has a crush on. But earlier she told Cady that she will help her by talking to Aaron about her having a crush on him. Instead, she said lies about Cady to make Aaron disgusted of Cady. This implied that Regina is practically a good liar by how smooth she can made things up and self-centered because she does not want her ex-boyfriend to be with anybody else even though she was the one that broke the relationship.

c. Sociological Dimension

The aspect of sociological dimensional characters can be seen by ones social life. How ones are interacting with other characters or another viewpoint by knowing what are the characters jobs in the movie, education background and social status among others (Roucek, 1963).

Data 1

CADY. I guess it's natural for parent's to cry on their kid's first day at school. But, it's actualy happens when the kid is 5 years old, I'm 16. And until today I was homeschooled.

From data number 1, it can be analyzed that Cady has a loving family. By how her parents cried at her first day of high school it can be seen that she has parents that care about her so much even for every little things despite that she is not a little girl anymore.

Data 2

[04:35]

CADY. I have never lived in a world where adults don't trust me, where they always yelling at me.

Based on Cady's monologue above, it delivered the information that she has always been considered to be a responsible young girl among adults around her when she was in Africa. Until she is surprised by how little of trust that the adults around her gave her when she moved to America. This also implied a different social relation between Cady and adults in Africa with adults in America.

Data 3

CADY. My parents are totally normal except that my parents are research zoologist and we spend 12 years in Africa

Data number 3 shows the sociological dimension of the character Cady. Cady basically happen to be born with parents that are smart, this can be seen by their jobs which both of them are zoologists for living. This also support why Cady is introduced as a smart character.

Data 4

CADY. Who is The Plastics?
DAMIEN. They're the teen royalty. If North Shore was Us Weekly, They would be always on the cover

According to Demian's description of The Plastics (Regina, Gretchen and Karen) it can be implied that they are considered to be having a high social status among their school environment. This shows that they are the famous ones at the school and everybody knows them.

Data 5

DAMIEN. That one is Gretchen Weiners. She is totally rich. Her dad invented Toaster Strudel.

Data number 5 is a description of Gretchen Weiners, one of the Plastics by Damien. Gretchen is the rich one in the group. She has a high social status not

only in school but also outside the school because her father is a rich bussinessman.

Data 6

GIRL. Regina George is so Flawless. She has two Fendi purses and a silver Lexus. I heard she insurance he hair for 100.000 dollars.

Data number 6 is a description made by one of the girls in the school about Regina George. This utterance implied that Regina also has a social status among her school friends and she is basically rich. This analysis is supported through the luxurious things that she owns and also the fact that she insurance her hair for one thousand grand says it all.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, based on the three dimensional charcaters theory by Lajos Egri and supported using the theory of characterization by Kenney (1966), the main characters in the movie *Mean Girls* have such a specific teenagers dimensional characters. The movie used two types of method of characterization, they are dramatix and character on other character method. Most of the data are using the techniqe of character on other character method of characterization by Kenney (1966).

The plastics or also the main mean girls in physiological dimensions they are all described as girls who happen to be appeared physically intresting based on the valuation by teenagers at the time. the character Regina George physically described as a girl that has a nice body or skinny, beautiful hair, pretty face and her mien is flawless. Moreover, the character, Cady Heron physically appeared to have a pretty have pretty and sexy looking.

In psychological dimensional character, the main character of the

movie has a pretty bad personality. Especially Regina George, she is described that her looks could fool everyone because of how evil she is on the inside. She is mean, fake, self-centered and a good liar. Regina George is the leader of the mean girls, The Plastics, whose ingrainedly vicious kind of girl but she still managed to be idolized by people because of her glamorous life and that every girl is dying to be her. The plastics has other two girls who are basically Regina's underling, they are Gretchen Weiners and Karen Smith. Both are evil but they basically just doing as how Regina wants them to do. While Cady Heron psychologically, she is genuine and sincere but her personality changed when she starts to hang out with Regina then slowly became the second Regina.

Moreover, in the aspect of sociological dimensional characters, the mean girls or the plastics are all described as people who are rich and having a high social status among their social life both at school and outside. Regina was born in a rich family but not very harmonious, she is popular in her society, while Cady was born in a middle-class family, she is not as rich as Regina but grew up in a pretty harmonious family and is new to the life of popular girls.

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