

# Characterization of the Characters in *The Pursuit of Happyness* Movie

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**Abstract:** *This study intended to identify the types of the main and secondary characters and to describe the characterization method used by the author to represent the characters in the movie. This study applied the theory proposed by William Kenney (1966) in the book *How to Analyze Fiction* and the theory by Pickering and Hooper (1962) in the book *Concise Companion to Literature*. The data of this study were analyzed by descriptive qualitative method. The result of this study shows the types of characters, which are Chris Gardner and Christopher. Based on the data analysis, they are can be categorized as a round character. The author used the telling method of characterization to represent the characters through their appearance. He has also used showing methods of characterization through the dialogue between the characters and their action.*

**Keywords:** *types of character, characterization, main character, a secondary character.*

## INTRODUCTION

Literature is the creation of human consciousness and inspiration, which is communicated by the characters into a concrete form (Wellek and Warren, 1962:3). The author tells their experience in real life or imagination and sometimes their imaginary in the literature such as in a movie. The movie is not only for entertaining but also can be considered as a medium of learning. It would open their mind to many things; they can gain and learn new things from another perspective through the character in the movie itself. The story in the movie is built by characters. Characters are the life of literature: they are the objects of our curiosity and fascination, affection and dislike, admiration and condemnation (Bennet and Royle: 2004). The author usually creates a character inspired by a human in real life or his surroundings. After watching a movie, most of the audience copied their favorite characters, they also obsessed and want to be like them. Because of those phenomena, it is interesting to analyze the kinds of characters and their characterization to improve our knowledge about people because a character represented a human in real life, we can see ourselves in them with their personalities and journeys in the movies. In this study, the researcher is interested in analyzing the

characterization which is from one of the famous movies of young-adult ages named *The Pursuit of Happyness*.

Based on the background of the study above, the researcher formulated this research through the following questions: What types of main and secondary characters are found in *The Pursuit of Happyness* movie?, How is the characterization of the main and secondary character represented in *The Pursuit of Happyness* movie?

## METHOD AND THEORY

The methodology in this analysis is categorized into four; Data Source, Method and Technique of Collecting Data, Method and Technique of Analyzing Data, and Method and Technique of Presenting Data.

### Data Source

The source of data was taken from a movie entitled *The Pursuit of Happyness* as the main data which is accessed on Netflix. The movie was directed by Gabriele Muccino and was published in 2006. The duration of the movie is 1 hour 57 minutes.

### Method and Technique of Collecting Data

The data of this study were collected by documentation method, which is through note-taking technique. There were several steps in collecting the data: firstly, watching the full movie of *The Pursuit of Happyness* and reading the movie subtitle. Secondly, Take a note of the dialogues and take a screenshot of the subtitle, which is dealing with the problems that will be investigated.

### Method and Technique of Analyzing Data

The method that was used in analyzing data in this study was a descriptive qualitative method. There were several steps in analyzing the data. Firstly, identifying the data in terms of the types of characters and characterization. Secondly, reviewing the data that has been collected. Thirdly, analyzing the data based the Kenney's theory about the kinds of character and Pickering and Hoepfer's theory about techniques of characterization. Fourthly, drawing the conclusion based on the data analysis.

### Method and Technique of Presenting Data

In this study, the researcher used formal and informal methods in presenting data. In presenting the data analysis, there were several steps. First, presenting the data in a table. Second, the data was followed by the analysis of the data which were presented based on the theory in words or sentences and the form of paragraphs, the first one for the type of characters and the second one for the characterization of the characters.

### Literature Review

In this study, the researcher presents some previous studies to gain a deeper understanding related to this topic. Five articles discuss character analysis in a movie that was analyzed as follows.

Huda (2017) analyzed the characterization of the main character "Ron Clark" as a good teacher who inspiring, self-confidence, innovating, caring, helpful, creative, humorist, responsible, hard worker, and discipline. Similarly, Priana (2016) analyzed the characterization of Bella in the movie *Twilight Saga New Moon*. He discovered that Bella as the main character was characterized as a lover, a faithful person, and not a materialistic person. Rasyid (2018) also discussed characterization. He found out that there are 13 extracts found that indicated the characterization in the two characters in the *Suicide Squad* movie.

Asminda (2018) discussed the characterization and conflict of Maleficent as the main character. She found out that Maleficent's characterization in the movie is a good girl, grumpy, trouble maker, guardian angels, and a good witch. 2) The conflicts that can be seen in the *Maleficent* movie are internal conflict (*Maleficent* loves Stefan but he betrayed *Maleficent* and make her cannot control her emotion when she revenges her love for

this child) and external conflict (conflict *Maleficent* with Stefan and conflict *Maleficent* with King Henry). Meanwhile, Väänänen (2020) discussed the characterization of the main character and development as a character in light of translation studies. The result of this study is the translator, which has indeed used domestication to make stylistic changes in the novel. In the translations, many parts regarding Edmund were domesticated. Characterization devices were numerous, although the physical description was left out. There were only a few observations about whether Edmund looks well or not. There is no mention of physical characteristics such as height or hair color.

### Theoretical Framework

#### Kinds of Character

This study uses the theory of kinds of character proposed by Kenney (1966). He divided character in fiction can be divided into two types: 1) Simple (flat) character is less representation of a human personality than the embodiment of a single attitude or obsession in a character. 2) The complex (round) character means we see all sides of the character. This character is more lifelike than the simple because in life people are not simply embodiments of single attitudes.

#### Characterization

According to Pickering and Hoepfer (1962) direct methods of revealing the characterization of character by telling. First, characterization through the use of names means the characters' names are often used to provide essential clues that aid in characterization. Characterization through appearance means what a character wears, how he looks are often provided essential clues to character. Characterization by an author means the author interrupts the narrative and reveals directly, through a series of editorial comments, the nature and personality of the characters' minds.

The second method is an indirect method that involves the author's stepping aside, as it were, to allow the characters to reveal themselves directly through their dialogue and their actions. According to Pickering and Hoepfer (1962) indirect methods of revealing the characterization of character by showing. First, characterization through dialogue. The author represented the character through what is being said, the identity of the speaker, the occasion, the identity of the person, and the quality of the exchange. Second, characterization through action. Some actions of the character reveal how they are in the movie.

### RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The analysis related to the examples of types of a main and secondary character and its characterization in *The Pursuit of Happyness* movie.

## Chris Gardner as the main character

### Data 1



(Chris Gardner)

**Gardner:** Oh, excuse me...when is somebody gonna clean this off? And the Y? The Y. We talked about this. It's an I in "happiness." There's no Y in "happiness." It's an I.

The data above showed that Gardner is a caring person. When he walked around his son's school, he saw there is a bad word which is "Fuck" written on the door, he asked when that word will be clean because it was a bad thing, especially it was written on the door around the school. There is also a misspelling in the word "happyness", the "y" should be "i". He asked the man who is a janitor about it and hopefully would change it into the correct word.

The author used a showing method of characterization, which is through action. From what he did, the author created Gardner as a caring person. In that scene, he criticizes the misspelled word "happyness" into the correct word that is "happiness" and asked the men to clean off the bad that is written on the door. Gardner does that because he cares about the surroundings, he does not want everyone still misspelling the word "happiness". He also does not want the children who walk around there to see the bad word.

### Data 2

**Gardner:** Woo! Man. I got two questions for you: what do you do and how do you do it?

The man: I'm a stockbroker

**Gardner:** Had to go to college to a stockbroker, huh?

The man: You don't have to. Had to be good numbers and good with people. That's it.

**Gardner:** Hey, you take care. Hey, I'm gonna let you hang on to my car for the weekend. But I need it back for Monday.

The man: Feed the meter.

**Gardner** : (speak to himself) I still remember that moment. They all looked so damn happy to me. Why couldn't I look like that?

This scene took place in front of Dean Witter's firm. The data above showed that Gardner is a curious person about something, which is good. The scene showed that he had a dream to be a stockbroker like a man who he met. He was amazed at the man and asked him about how to be a stockbroker. Because he has a dream that he wants to be a stockbroker, it can be seen from that last

sentence he said that why he could not be like that. It means that he also wants to be a stockbroker.

The author used a showing method of characterization to characterize the character, which is through dialogue. He showed that Gardner is a curious person from what he said in the dialogue with a man that he met in front of the office. He has a dream to be a stockbroker that is why he asks the man about how to be a stockbroker.

### Data 3

**Gardner:** Linda, that is what I am trying to do. This is what I'm trying to do for my family for you and Christopher.

Linda: What's the matter with you?

This scene took place at Gardner's house. He was in a bad economic situation. Gardner and his wife, Linda, conflicted. This scene, tells us that Gardner is an optimistic person. He is never giving up in any situation. In that scene, his wife was mad with him because of their economic condition, she thought that her husband just wasting his time on the bone density scanner that he sells. But he still tried to convince his wife that he was doing his best for her and their son.

The author used a showing method of characterization, which is through dialogue between Gardner and his wife, Linda. The author created the character of Chris Gardner as an optimistic person. It can be seen from what he said. His words showed that he is an optimistic person, which is he said that he doing his best for the family. He still tries to sell the scanner and find a job as a broker. But, unfortunately, his wife did not believe him.

## Christopher as the secondary character

### Data 4

Gardner: Everything's fine, okay?

Christopher: Where do I sleep tonight?

Gardner: Let me ask you something. Are you happy?

**Christopher:** Yeah.

Gardner: All right. Because I'm happy. And if you're happy and I'm happy, then that's a good thing, right?

**Christopher:** Yeah.

Gardner: All right. You're sleeping with me.

From the dialogue above, we can see that Christopher is an obedient son. When he asked about where is he should sleep tonight and his father told him that he will sleep with him, he just follows it without any protest. At his age, he can accept those things and still trying to be happy for his father. He is a good son.

The characterization of Christopher as an obedient son has used showing method through the dialogue. It can be seen from the dialogue, what Christopher has been said. He never protests against his father. He just follows what his father told him when he asked about where he will sleep tonight because his mother left him. Now he will take care

of by his father, so his father told him that he will sleep with him and the important thing is they are happy together.

#### Data 5

Christopher: Dad. You don't have a shoe  
 Gardner: Yep. I know. Wanna know what happened?  
 Christopher: Yeah.  
 Gardner: I got hit by a car.  
 Christopher: You got hit by a car?  
 Gardner : [Chuckles] Yep.  
 Christopher: Where?  
 Gardner: Um, just right by the office.  
 Christopher: No. Where in your body?  
 Gardner: Like the back of my legs. Hey, goodbye, Mrs. Chu.  
 Christopher: Were you on the street?  
 Gardner: Yeah. I was running in the street.  
**Christopher: Don't do that. You can get hurt.**  
 Gardner: Yeah, thanks. I'll remember that next time.

This scene took place at a football match. Christopher saw his father without a shoe. Then, Gardner explained to him what happened. Christopher worried about his father and remind him to be more careful when he is in the street.

This scene showed that Christopher is a caring person. He knows his father got hit by a car, so he told him to be careful and do not do that again because he will get hurt. He does not want to see his father get hurt, he cares for his father.

The author used the showing method, which is by dialogue. Christopher is a caring person can be seen from what he says to his father when he knows that his father gets hurt. He gives attention and reminds his father to be more careful and not running in the street because it was dangerous and he can get hurt.

#### CONCLUSION

The following is the conclusion of the whole research which was been done in the previous chapter. In analyzing the types of characters in the movie, the main and second characters can be categorized as round characters. Gardner as the main character has some characteristics. Based on the analysis, he is a caring, curious, optimistic, careless, hardworking, a good father, and has a bad manner. The character of Gardner was created by some method of characterization. The author used the telling method which is through the appearances and the showing method of characterization which is through the dialogue and action.

The second character that was analyzed in the movie is Christopher Jr. He can be categorized as a round character. Based on the analysis, he is an obedient kid and a caring person. The characterization method of the second character is also used telling and showing method. The author

represented Christopher through his appearance and the dialogue with the other characters.

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