

Contemplating Religious Work Ethics in *The Pursuit of Happiness* and *Doa yang Mengancam*

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ABSTRACT

The two films *The Pursuit of Happiness* (2006) and *Doa yang Mengancam* (2008) as the representations of Protestant and Muslim communities both demonstrate significant implications toward the dynamics of work ethics. The problem addressed by this comparison of two cinematic works is the influences of two different religious values on personal work ethics. The foundation of comparative literature paradigm is the idea that by studying literary works from various cultural and linguistic contexts, we can better understand how historical and cultural situations form human experiences—in this case, religious work ethics—occur. The aim of this research is to compare the representation of work ethics within the two main characters in the films as influenced by their respective religious values. The theory used for solving the case is Stuart Hall's (1997) representation theory by using the constructivism paradigm (symbolic, image, discursive, and myth function) with qualitative research method. The findings show that Chris, as a Protestant, has higher work ethics than Madrim, a young Muslim, according to Max Weber's Protestant Ethic principles. However, this situation has an impact on the Protestant's attitude which is more materialistic than that of the Muslim which shows an equality between worldly wealth and good deeds in the afterlife.

Keywords: comparative literature, film, Islam, Protestant, religious work ethic

INTRODUCTION

Films as cultural products and media of artistic expressions not only have messages to convey but also sustain cultural values or, even, form a new culture. Film is not a separate system of signification, such as writing, but an integration of technology and discourse embodied in camera, lighting, editing, set design, and sound. All of these contribute to the meaning that the film wants to convey (Turner 1999). As a popular culture, films are media that provide messages from the representation of life in society from different social classes in the storyline (Ramrao 2016). Thus, film, as an integration of technology and story, can represent a meaning.

The meaning represented in a story can also be seen in the film entitled *The Pursuit of Happiness* (2006) which was directed by Gabriele Muccino. The story in this film teaches that happiness comes from a process and consistency. This film is based on a true story of an Afro-American named Chris Gardner. It tells Gardner's struggle to pursue the American Dream. "He has reached his personal American Dream, of which success is the most important part" (GC 2015). Chris Gardner, the main character, tries to escape his family's from poverty by selling his bone density scanner and trying his luck in an internship program at Dean Witter, a stock brokerage firm. Eventually, thanks to his consistency and high regard for the difficult process, he lives the prosperous life he has hoped for, the American Dream.

The Pursuit of Happiness also shows both work ethics and religious values. This is shown in the scene when Chris is working as a salesman who succeeds in selling a bone density scanner after finding himself rejected many times at several previous hospitals. The next scene, when Chris Gardner and his son, Christopher,

attend the church for worship, is one example that Chris is religious and obedient to Protestant values.



Figure 1: *Chris Gardner and Christopher on churchgoing.*

The same goes for *Doa yang Mengancam* that is directed by Hanung Bramantyo (2008). The film revolves around Madrim, a market porter who is desperate to work his way out of poverty. Therefore, Madrim prays until he threatens God to get what he wants. However, Madrim is cursed by God by being struck by lightning and given superpowers as a punishment. Although he manages to gather wealth from these superpowers, he is still unhappy because he still cannot find his wife. Madrim has an epiphany after the death of his wife and begins to establish a balance between being happy in worldly life and sustaining merit for the afterlife.

One of the religious values and work ethics shown in this film is when Kadir, a Madrim's friend, advises Madrim that all wealth people hope for comes from Allah. This is the same as the moral message of the film that all efforts and work ethics must be accompanied by prayers, as can be seen in the following dialogue.

MADRIM : *Gua kerja mati-matian ya, tiap hari. Tetep aja rezeki gua seret. Jangan sok tahu lo Dir ah!*

(I work like crazy, every day. Just keep my luck dragging. Don't pretend to know, Dir!)

KADIR : *Udah doa belum lo? Sok marah-marah lo.*

(Have you prayed yet? You're so angry.)

From the simple comparison above, both depart from their own religious beliefs and rationale. Spirituality constituted by religion nowadays represents a new flowering in individual and cultural religious expressions (Zinnbauer et al. 1997). Chris Gardner's stance here can be supported by the *United States Declaration of Independence*, which is the setting of *The Pursuit of Happyness* and indeed has a significant Protestant influence. The sentence is as presented below:

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

While the second film, in contrast, upholds Islamic values as in the Qur'an, *Surah al-Qasas* verse 77 which has the following meaning:

Seek by means of the wealth that Allah has granted you the Abode of the afterlife, but forget not your share in this world and do good as Allah has been good to you and do not strive to create mischief in the land, for Allah loves not those who create mischief.

This message encourages Muslims to equalize the affairs of the world and the afterlife.

The comparison of these two films and religions raises a problem. Admittedly, religion can influence a person's personality, a motivational construction (Gorsuch 1994). As an American and Protestant, Chris Gardner tries to get out of his impoverished state by plodding and praying. He has one goal that he manages to achieve; wealth and happiness. And after all, he gets those things. Just like Madrim, as a Muslim, he also tries to live a prosperous and happy life by working hard. Thanks to his superpowers, he does get the wealth, but he is still unhappy. In the end, he finds happiness by living simply and not relying on wealth. The problem addressed by this comparison is the influence of two different religious values on a person's work ethics that yields happiness which is seen as the aim of living. From this problem, a hypothesis can be formed that Protestants, who unconsciously practice the act of Protestant ethics, tend to have higher work ethics than Muslims who adhere to Islamic values.

If interpreting a film using a religious perspective is a normal moral act, what if it is reversed; interpreting religion through a film as a cultural product that is highly demanded in society will be wrong if we are not aware enough and critical in interpreting it. We must agree to the contrary that films can facilitate us to interpret and understand religion and varied perspectives on religion (Blizek, Desmarais, and Burke 2011). This has turned into an urgency. Popular culture, such as films, can portray good religious values and vice versa. An understanding of what religion is being discussed in the movie is no less crucial. Although all religious teachings teach goodness, each religion has its own way in its delivery.

From the preceding consideration of two literary works to a comparative viewpoint, it is obvious that looking at works in pairs can help us understand both the specific texts and the larger literary canon. The foundation of the paradigm of comparative literature is the idea that by studying literary works from various cultural and linguistic contexts, we can better understand how historical and cultural situations form the human experience. By contrasting two literary works, we can draw attention to themes, styles, and techniques that are similar and dissimilar, as well as hidden links between seemingly unrelated writings. Using this lens, we can examine the intricacies of the human experience across cultural and historical boundaries using the comparative literature paradigm. Comparative literature studies the relations between different literary systems and traditions, whether they come from different cultures, languages, eras, or genres. This inquiry is about the reputation and penetration, influence, and fame of a major work (Wellek and Warren 1948).

Referring to the background that has been described above, this research focuses on the work ethics and religious values as influential aspects that are represented in the films *The Pursuit of Happiness* and *Doa yang Mengancam*. This article answers questions related to what kind of work ethics are represented and how religious values loom over each cast's work ethics in the two films.

LITERARY REVIEW

In his article *Cultural Interpretation of the Pursuit of Happiness*, Junhong (2014) aims to interpret the scope of American culture and how representative the film is. *The Pursuit of Happiness* successfully carries the American cultural connotation of the American dream (national ethos) with its unrelenting effort and spirit of hard work. This finding connects to the related topic of work ethic, bridging Chris Gardner's unyielding spirit attitude. Further research is needed to delve deeper into the influence of Protestant Work Ethic (PWE) on the formation of Chris' American work ethics. This is essential because the characterization of Chris as an unyielding person has never been explored in more details, especially regarding the causes and influences of the formation of this trait.

Meanwhile, *Doa yang Mengancam* has among others been studied by Tamam (2019) under the title *Da'wah Messages about Kaifiyah Do'a in the Movie Doa yang Mengancam*. This study aims at finding the preaching messages in the movie *Doa yang Mengancam* related to *kaffiyeh* or good prayer. The findings in this study are that a prayer will be granted by Allah if it is not performed in hurry, the person is neither easily despair nor prays to others than Allah. It is clear that the aspect of religiosity in Islam has a great influence on one's life, especially work ethics and an unyielding spirits. This finding is very suitable to be connected to the topic of this current research which alludes to the aspects of religiosity. There are also serious implications coming from the research findings for the participation of religious aspects in the formation of a person's work ethics.

It is called a religious work ethic because we are talking about two different faiths; Islam and Protestantism. Both Islamic Work Ethic (IWE) and PWE have several different approaches to interpret work ethics. In a journal article entitled *Work Ethic in Islamic Perspective*, Irham (2012). explains that there are serious problems related to the decline in the value of work in Islamic society caused by the rapid development of an oppressive feudal regime. This shows that the condition of the Muslim work ethic is not in a good state. Meanwhile, as a contract and comparator, PWE is more than just a definition that exists on the surface but also a distinctive paradigm adopted in the pursuit of economic success. It is reinforced by another article entitled *The Protestant Work Ethic in Britain and Malaysia* which shows an unusual result because Malaysians from various economic and gender backgrounds in a country farther from America, the country that established PWE, have a higher rate of belief in PWE than the British (Furnham and Muhiudeen 2010). This insinuates an urgency pertaining to the glimpse of the possibility of PWE flourishing and permeating countries where the majority of people are not Protestants, especially developing countries in Southeast Asia.

UNDERLYING THEORIES

Comparative literature is an academic and interdisciplinary study that compares and analyzes the similarities, differences, and patterns found between literary works. Comparative literature is the study of the relations between different literary systems and traditions, whether they come from different cultures, languages, eras, or genres. The purpose of comparative literature studies is to bridge cultural differences, develop a holistic perspective, and deepen the understanding of literary works. Comparative literature aims to study literary works from different cultures, languages, and times and understand how they represent reality (Auerbach 1957).

Representation is the creation of concepts of meaning in the mind through language (Hall 1997). Representation can be said to be the way we use language in using or conveying something meaningful to others. Representation can be interpreted as the process of representing a sign of what is displayed by sound, images, and so on. Representation of film as a medium can be examined to show that the film can provide a concept of meaning or sign contained in each scene and shot. The researchers used the constructive paradigm of representation theory by Stuart Hall, which consists of four variables; symbolic function, image function, discursive function, and myth function for the purpose of analysis in this study. Symbolic function is a particular thing that symbolizes or represent an ideal concept and convey meaning. On the other hand, image function takes Image as the signifier of an ideologically framed message or meaning. Meanwhile, discursive function comprises a group of statements that provides a language for talking about a particular topic that provides meaning. Lastly, myth function gives

meaning to something that is essentially cultural into something that manifests naturally (Hall 1997).

RESEARCH METHOD

This research applied a descriptive-qualitative method that was focused on the constructivism paradigm in Stuart Hall's Representation theory. It acquires data via thorough examination, documents, scholarly articles, and other resources pertinent to the subject under investigation. The approach constitutes a research methodology aimed at delineating and comprehending phenomena by amassing insights from diverse origins, such as observation, interview, documentation, etc., and subsequently merging them with qualitative analysis to extract the essence of the phenomenon (Merriam and Tisdell 2015). This approach furnishes a comprehensive depiction and facilitates a more profound insight into how individuals or collectives perceive and react to these challenges. The qualitative method was applied by reading and collecting data from each scene in both films. The data in this case are in the forms of images and linguistic units of dialogues representing the overall contexts of related situation.

Throughout the research, the religious values shown by the two films as the material objects of the study were referred to the tenets of the religions of the main characters. *Doa yang Mengancam* refers to Islamic values as a conceptual framework. The dialogues in this film was referred to the verses of the Qur'an and Hadith related to IWE. Meanwhile, *The Pursuit of Happiness* was analyzed by using the conceptual framework of Max Weber's Protestant ethics theory and Protestant values itself. Protestant Ethics theory shows that a person's religiosity can be seen from the work ethics that each individual gives to economic sustainability, which means PWE (Weber 1905).

DISCUSSIONS

Work Ethics of the Two Main Characters

A work ethic is an attitude that shows persistence in doing work. The values of continuous commitment, perseverance, and thrift are the basis of a work ethic that they hope will yield long-term results from today's hard work (Hellriegel and Slocum 2011). It can be added that in work ethics, it can be seen how eager individuals/groups have to pursue a goal. In *The Pursuit of Happiness*, Chris Gardner shows a strong work ethic in pursuing a sustainable life in San Francisco, USA. Meanwhile, in *Doa yang Mengancam*, Madrim seeks his fortune in the capital city of Jakarta. His work ethic aims to prosper and to fulfill his promise to his wife, Leha, that one day they will live prosperously.

Identification of the Work Ethics

At the beginning of the film, Chris Gardner shows the attitude and behaviour related to work ethics with direct dialogues and intermittent voice-overs that he is a salesman who sells bone density scanners. But he is legally defrauded by the manufacturer of the machine because he just found out that the device is less desirable to doctors by being called an 'unnecessary luxuries' thing. With Chris and his wife (Linda) having signed the sales agreement contract with a dowry of their lifetime savings, Chris begins a life of hardship due to their ignorance that the device would not sell well in the market. Chris' struggle to sell the device is shown many times at the beginning of the film when he is rejected by a doctor after he tries to sell his machine. This scene of Chris being rejected while trying to sell a bone density scanner has appeared several times in films with different bone specialists. This shows not only the high work ethics but also the great grit that Chris Gardner possesses. This work ethic is also the reason why Chris Gardner remains steadfast after finding out that he was rejected many times by the doctors. In add-on, Chris Gardner's persistence in selling the scanner is also

emphasized by the fact that he still sells the scanner until almost the end of the film.



Figure 2: *Madrim was reprimanded by his superior to return to work.*

Different from Madrim, as a market porter, he shows that he wants to get out of the poverty of Jakarta to make his wife, Leha, happy. He is entangled in a myth that if he wants to be prosperous, then he must wander and work in Jakarta, whereas in fact, it is not that sweet. In the early of the film, Madrim's work ethic is seen in one of the scenes. When he is in the middle of eating his food, he is reprimanded by his superior to continue working.

In the early part of the film, several scenes show Madrim's work ethics when he is working as a market coolie. After reprimanded by his superior to get back to work, Madrim immediately stops eating and go straight back to work. He do not care about his unfinished food. Instead, he run straight to the truck carrying sacks of market logistics. Madrim would not have done this if he did not have a positive work ethic. The positive work ethic here is an act of self-actualization where hard work with a positive and passionate ethos is an act of reaching human nature and being self-actualized (Titisari, Warso, and Haryono 2016). Madrim's hard work as a market porter is an effort that is in accordance with his abilities (manual labor) so that later he can live prosperously with Leha. However, it turns out that Leha can no longer wait and leaves Madrim. This is a blow to Madrim to work harder so that he can return to Leha's arms along with his sweet promise of migrating to Jakarta, a prosperous life.



Figure 3: *Madrim synergizes his hard work with constant prayers And worships to God.*

It is essential to know the montage that shows Madrim's work ethics in the hope that his life can change for better in the presence of Leha who has left him. This montage shows a vertical montage after Madrim is advised by Kadir that if they want to prosper, they must synergize hard work with praying to God. Vertical montage is a combination of thematically or emotionally related images/scenes (Metz 1991). Therefore, in the vertical montage scene in Figure 3, there is a set of sequences that is classified as vertical because the main purpose of the plot, besides building the audience's emotions, is to show that Madrim is trying to work hard and pray to return to the arms of his beloved wife.

Although porters do have work ethics and work disciplines, simultaneously or partially, these do not affect their economic level. This is due to low and stagnant salaries (Anam 2018). This is indeed true in the film. After working hard 'desperately', Madrim still does not prosper. Madrim's hope for Leha to return to him is increasingly distant. Even though, he has worked hard and possesses high work ethics, the discipline of worship as a synergy, he remains at the same position. It is because the wages he gets are not what he hopes for, i.e. economic development for welfare. This is what makes Madrim start to despair.

In opposition to Madrim, Chris Gardner, amid the film, decides to look for an additional job that can provide an extra income apart from the desperate selling of his scanners by joining an internship program. During the internship selection process, there is an event that has to be spotlighted. The scene where Chris suggests Jay Twistle (head of Human Resources) share a ride in a taxi to a destination that they both accidentally want to head to. Chris is intentionally waiting for Jay outside the office to ask about the internship. The scene turns into an interesting situation after Chris performs a persuasive discourse to tell Jay that he is worthy of an interview. Unfortunately, Chris's persuasive actions that state many things that he deserves to be accepted at the stock brokerage office do not bear results. Jay ignores Chris's presence in the taxi because he is distracted by his Rubik's Cube, which is being talked about as a game that is difficult to solve. With every opportunity he could find, Chris tries to solve Jay's Rubik's Cube to gain his attention.



Figure 4: *Chris Gardner completed all the colours on Rubik's Cube.*

Two attitudes reflect the work ethics expressed in this event. Firstly, when Chris tries every opportunity he can to get more attention from Jay even though it is just a trivial act, that is finishing the Rubik's Cube. Chris has indeed made a professional effort by telling Jay about his work history. But since Jay do not care about that, he search for another opportunity by solving Jay's Rubik's Cube in front of him directly. It pays off. Chris does not get any real closure in the scene, but Jay is starting to consider Chris in his internship program. This is a result of Chris' consistent work ethics.

Secondly, when Jay finds out that Chris has been waiting in front of Dean Witter's office every day for a whole month to get the results of the internship selection, this dialogue occurs.

MR PATHMARK : Jay says you are pretty determined.

JAY TWISTLE : He is been waiting outside the front of the building with some 40-pound gizmo for over a month.

After giving the internship application form directly to the head of Human Resources, Jay Twistle, Chris waits for the results of the internship selection every day for a month. This positive attitude is defined as the necessary attitude to make a good impression on colleagues and office manager Dean Witter (StudyCorgi 2023). And rightly so, as a result of his attitude, Chris is called in for a job interview at the office. Nor a long time afterwards, Chris is accepted as an intern in Dean Witter's office. Chris interprets the process of waiting for the screening results as a time for him to introduce himself ahead of others who were also waiting for the results. All of his efforts are paid off as expected.

While Madrim, in the midst of the film, After being cursed because he has threatened God, he made efforts to perform a work ethic by relying on his superpower with the same goal; to seek wealth and prosperity. Madrim's superpower is that he can see where people are just by looking at a single picture. At first, Madrim utilizes the superpower properly. Madrim uses his superpower for helping the police catch suspects who are being sought for and investigated. With his superpower, one by one, the suspects are caught. Madrim, with his work ethic, has brought the police into the limelight by arresting 52 fugitives in just two weeks. This gives a positive impact on Madrim. He starts earning a better salary than being a porter at the market. It remains to be said that the money earned and the police achievement would not have been obtained if Madrim do not have a work ethic despite his superpower. However, in contrast with Chris Gardner, later, Madrim faces bigger obstacle with Tantra.

Tantra, a national-class beggar who begins to worry about Madrim's presence in the police department, immediately arrests Madrim and persuades him to work under his orders with a salary that is much fold higher than that is given by the police. Innocently, albeit bitterly, Madrim accepts the offer and eventually assists Tantra in predicting the future stock market. Madrim's work ethic when working under Tantra is to persistently help Tantra and his business friends win the stock market by guessing from his superpower. While this may seem negative from a neutral perspective, it is still a work ethic. The work ethic here occurs because the higher one's satisfaction with a big salary, the greater the work ethic is (Indartono and Widodo 2014). This gives a clear sign that Madrim has done his work well and with the amount of work ethic given even though the action is a negative act because he helps a national-class beggar.

Toward the end of the film, Chris Gardner shows his work ethic by doing various strategies to be able to compete with other interns. Their task is only one; to reach the stock sales target by trying to offer their products to potential clients over the telephone. The internship program is followed by people who have passed the selection process and there will be one of them to later become a permanent employee as what Chris expects. Here's an example of one of the scenes.

CHRIS GARDNER (VO): They (other employees) do stay until 7. But I had Christopher. I had to do in six hours what they do in nine. In order not to waste any time I was not hanging up the phone in between calls. I realized that by not hanging up the phone

I gained another eight minutes a day. I also was not drinking water so I did not waste any time in the bathroom.

(Note: VO: voice over)

Along with the montage, Chris explains in voice-over how he manage to strategize during his internship. Chris Gardner knows he has a shortage of work hours because he has to pick up his son, Christopher, which means he can only work for 6 hours while other interns can work up to 9 hours per day. Chris Gardner's discourse above shows his work ethic because Chris has high tenacity in the internship program. Eventually, Chris Gardner, with all his efforts, which cannot be called easy to do, manage to become a permanent employee.

This is no less positive than Madrim's changed condition at the end of the film. After Madrim goes astray due to his superpower, he decides to reform. After getting a blow for Leha's choice to commit suicide in front of him instead of going back to live with him, Madrim makes up his mind to start his career all over again without his superpower. He goes back to work from scratches and hopes for halal sustenance by opening a small food stall around the market where Madrim was. Without his work ethic, Madrim would not have been able to establish the eatery. Aside from that, he was previously in bad condition after the death of his beloved wife, Leha.

**Determination of
Work Ethics
Representation**

From the three main discussions above that reflect the work ethic of the two characters in *The Pursuit of Happiness* and *Doa yang Mengancam*, two representations of work ethic emerge. Chris Gardner, with his work ethic, represents Americans who cling to the American Dream that has been promised in the American Declaration of Independence. Without prejudice to the fact that everything Chris does in pursuit of prosperity is an act of worshipping God, Chris Gardner represents that the pursuit of prosperity is a must and pursuing a decent life must be synergized with a high work ethic. Meanwhile, Madrim, with his work ethic and as the urban poor, has the opposite meaning. This is stated in *Sahih Muslim* no. 1055 which says: "O Allah, make the sustenance of Muhammad's family in the form of sufficient food."

As taught by the Prophet, this film, with the social and cultural context of Indonesia, represents a success that is not based on the wealth we have but on the equality and balance between the wealth we have and how we maintain the happiness we expect. Thus, it can be said that people's work ethics are influenced by religious values.

**Protestant vs
Islamic Work
Ethics: Religious
Values at Work**

Doa yang Mengancam shows several scenes that explicitly implicate the effects of religiosity as a teaching of Islam on work ethics (IWE). It can be seen from the discourse below.

MADRIM : *Lo yakin dir? Kalo gua rajin doa, rezeki gua lancar, dir?*

(Are you sure dir? If I pray diligently, my fortune will be smooth, dir?)

KADIR : *Jangan satu-satu drim. Harus bareng. Doa jangan putus, sama lo harus kerja keras.*

(Don't do it one at a time. Must be together. Prayers don't break, you have to work hard altogether.)

Kadir's advice, as one of the main messages that this film tries to convey, is indeed in line with the Islamic teachings, especially *Surah al-Munafiqun* verse 9, which has this meaning: "O believers! Do not let your wealth or your children divert you from the remembrance of Allah. For whoever does so, it is they who are the true losers".

Furthermore, Kadir's opinion as a reflection of Islamic teachings influences Madrim's work ethics, as Madrim then accepts and even implements what Kadir says. In the thematic montage in Figure 3, Madrim synergizes his hard work with constant prayers and worships to God. He shows sincerity as one of the attitudes of work ethic that he wants to be truly free from poverty.

It is different from *The Pursuit of Happyness* in which Chris Gardner clings to the value of Protestant religious teachings which also affects his work ethics. After going through various difficulties that marks the climax of the story in the film, Chris and his son attends a service which is led by a pastor and a musician.

PASTOR : We all have to deal with mountains (all problems of life). You know, mountains that go way up high. And mountains that go deep and low. Yes. We know what those mountains are, here at Glide (Church). We sing about them.

CHOIR : Lord, don't move that mountain. Give me the strength to climb it. Please don't move that stumbling block. But lead me, Lord, around it. My burdens, get so heavy. Seems hard to bear. But I won't give up, no, no. Because you promise me. You'd meet me at the altar of prayer.

The dialogue's poetic language and usage of religious allusions define its style. In his metaphorical speech, the Pastor compares life difficulties and obstacles to mountains. The use of terms like "mountains that go way up high" and "mountains that go deep and low" elevates the language and conveys a sense of grandeur and importance. In response to the Pastor's metaphor, the choir performs a song that incorporates comparable religious imagery. The metaphor of a stumbling block is used in the lyrics to symbolize the hardships that one can face, speaking of the necessity for fortitude and direction in the face of life challenges. The repetition of lines like "Lord, don't move that mountain" and "give me strength to climb it" gives the language a rhythmic, musical quality that makes it lyrical.

This dialogue's use of lyrical language and holy images together define its overall style. The chorus sings about the need for strength and guidance in the face of these problems, while the metaphor of mountains is employed to portray the idea of life challenges. The rhythm and musicality of the dialogue are enhanced by the repetition of some words which fosters harmony and solidarity within the religious community. In their talks and music, they try to convey the message to their congregation, including Chris and Christopher, that should not be hidden from life problems and should be faced instead. If we pray to God, we do not ask Him to remove our problems but to give us the strength to get through the problems. This scene explicitly shows that Chris' work ethics are also influenced by the religious aspect of the Protestant religion.

We cannot ignore that implicit messages in a film are also an important element in the process of understanding the film. The religious messages affecting work ethics in a film are not only explicitly explained but also implicitly inserted. This implicit meaning is an integral part of the meaning of the film and can make an important contribution to our understanding of the overall message of the film (Stam 1992). It is evident in the speech below.

MADRIM : *Aku tidak minta macam-macam Ya Allah, bantu aku Ya Allah. Tolong aku Ya Allah. Pertemuan aku dengan istriku Ya Allah. Temukan aku dengan istriku Ya Allah. Pertemuan aku dengan dia Ya Allah. Aku ga minta yang lebih cantik dari dia Ya Allah. Aku ga minta yang lebih baik dari dia Ya Allah. Cuma dia aja Ya Allah. Pertemuan Ya Allah.*

(I'm not asking for anything, O Allah, help me, O Allah. Help me, God. Meet me with my wife O Allah. Find me with my wife O Allah. Meet me with him O God. I didn't ask for anything prettier than her, O Allah. I didn't ask for anything better than her, O Allah. It's just him oh my god. Meet me with her, God)

Although the explicit scene here shows Madrim praying to Allah for Leha's presence, there is an implicit message as well. Recalling Kadir's words urges Madrim to equalize his hard work with prayers. This is exactly what happens here. After working hard for his prosperity, Madrim prays for the presence of his wife, Leha, who has left him for a long time. Soon afterwards, it comes true that Leha is present at the door of his hotel. Leha's presence in this case can be interpreted as a real proof of Kadir's words that hard work must be accompanied with prayers to God. Again, it is because not all wishes can be achieved by relying on work ethics only, but we also need to surrender to Him.



Figure 5: Madrim is tempted by the amount of cash offered by Tantra.

The next implicit message that interprets God's presence as All-Seeing is in the following scene. God's presence in the scene can be signalled by the motion of the camera and the light of the theatre. The slightest action of the camera can invest an object or face with intolerable significance (Mulvey 1975). Tantra, a high-profile villain who fears of being caught due to Madrim's presence in the police department, catches Madrim and offers him a job with a much higher salary than working with the police. Madrim is tempted and agrees to the offer. The interpretation of God's presence here is that when the camera was previously standing still and before Madrim decided to work under Tantra's orders, it then shots Madrim directly from the top (Figure 5). This indicates that Madrim is still on the right path, expected to reject the sinister offer. However, after Madrim is given the down payment at the beginning of the employment agreement, the camera immediately moves to the left which causes the theatre light to move away from Madrim as well. It can be interpreted here that Madrim's decision is against religious teachings. To summarize, even though we have a high work ethics, we should not accept the results of that work ethics if they are against the laws of our religion.

Meanwhile, the implicit message in *The Pursuit of Happiness* lies in the character of a crazy guy who appears several times and builds a pattern that eventually leads to interesting interpretations. The crazy guy is dressed shabbily and carries a bag with a figure of Mother Mary. At the beginning of the film, the crazy guy approaches Chris at the bus stop and starts a conversation. The transcript is as follows.

CRAZY GUY : What's that? It's a time machine, isn't it? Seems like a time machine. That seems like a time machine. It's a time machine. Take me with you.

CHRIS GARDNER (VO): This machine - this machine on my lap-

CRAZY GUY : This guy, he has a time machine. He travels in the past with this machine and-

CHRIS GARDNER (VO): It is not a time machine. It's a portable bone density scanner.

Indeed, the explicit message explained in the scene aims to introduce the strange device that Chris always carries, a portable bone density scanner. However, the crazy guy also raises other interesting interpretations. Amid his adventures in seeking welfare for his family, Chris commits an act of non-religiousness by not paying for either the taxi ride or the train ticket. Later, when he manages to escape from the taxi driver's pursuit by entering the almost shut down train, he finds that the bone density scanner he is holding is not able to enter the train. Unwillingly, Chris drops the device. However, the shot focuses on the place where the device falls.



Figure 6: *The Crazy Guy is about to take Chris's device.*

In front of the device, there is a crazy guy who has appeared at the beginning of the film and immediately takes the device. It can be interpreted that this crazy guy is an interpretation of Protestant religiosity. It can be implied that Chris's work ethic is being watched over by God and that his act of sin requires retribution. In this scene, the device becomes the retribution.

The device can be said to be a retribution for the sins committed by Chris, which can be reinforced by the scene when Chris forcibly takes the device from the crazy guy's hand. While Chris is experiencing a financial crisis due to tax collection by the USA tax agency, Chris finds the Crazy Guy who has previously taken the tool and immediately takes it by force. This has direct implications for the next storyline towards the climax of the film. Chris finds that the device has been damaged and cannot be sold. He is also forcibly kicked out by the motel owner for being late in paying rent and a friend who owes him money suddenly gives no news, until finally he is forced to sleep in the station toilet with Christopher. This series of bitter scenes drastically changes for the better when Chris "begs for forgiveness" from God in a church. Therefore, it needs to be said again that the device is a punishment for Chris's sin. Chris should have let the device go and apologizes to God for his sin.

The element that arises in the plot is explicitly included in the dynamics of Chris's struggle, but implicitly it is religiosity that influences the formation of

Chris's work ethics. He realizes that all the dynamics of life that he goes through can be overcome with his consistent work ethics. However, the will of his God cannot be bypassed in any way except by asking for forgiveness and forgiveness. This is reinforced in *Isaiah* 43: 18-19.

Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past. See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland.

The previous opinion, along with the verse, can underlie causes that the work ethics we have can be meaningless if we go against His will. We can only let go of all things that have happened even though they are not in line with the efforts we have made.

Being part of a predominantly Protestant society does not improve work ethics but being religious in a Protestant society does (Shirokanova 2015). The work-oriented attitude remains in monastic life today. They (various protestant orders) unite work and prayer and see manual labour as a disciplined way to serve God (Arslan 2020). This has a direct impact on Weber's ideas in his book entitled *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. It is no longer just an assumption that, besides realizing directly or indirectly, Chris as an American citizen, adheres to the belief that pursuing prosperity with his work ethic is a religious act that is worshipping God. Therefore, it is important to realize that PWE impacts Chris Gardner's high work ethic. Everything he does in the pursuit of prosperity has another specific purpose that the work ethic he puts into all the obstacles of life is a praiseworthy act in the eyes of God.



Figure 7: 1\$ Thomas Jefferson coin.

CHRIS GARDNER (VO) : It was right then that I started thinking about Thomas Jefferson, the Declaration of Independence. And the part about our right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

The scene where Chris remembers the passage in the American Declaration when he sees a coin with Thomas Jefferson's face after losing his bone density scanner at the station gives us another message that Chris is, indeed, going through all the means and efforts to achieve prosperity with the PWE principle. This is so because historically, America and its declaration were created by the will of the Puritans. After getting sins by not paying for the taxi ride and not paying for the train ticket, Chris ponders whether the phrase 'pursuit of happiness' in the American Declaration is a mistake or whether happiness is something that we can only pursue but cannot possess. This could be interpreted as the leading edge of Chris's almost desperate quest for a decent life.

The common thread of this sub-chapter is not only a work ethic that is shaped by religiosity but also a comparison of the way Chris and Madrim define

a life purpose that is influenced by religious teachings as well. The representation of work ethics from *The Pursuit of Happyness* has developed if we relate it to the protestant religiosity factors and Max Weber's Protestant Ethic guidelines that cannot be removed as they are inherent. It can be echoed that the representation of work ethics influenced by religious values and PWE guidelines in *The Pursuit of Happyness* is an obligation to strive for a decent life without violating God's prohibitions with the ultimate goal of prosperity. This goal can be said to be mandatory and has indeed been promised to be achieved by Chris as a Protestant, and he gets it thanks to his high work ethic.

Meanwhile, in *Doa yang Mengancam*, with IWE as its guidelines, the representation of work ethics born from the influence of religious teachings can mean an obligation to equalize hard work with constant prayers to God. Madrim's goal of seeking prosperity is represented by the Prophet Muhammad's command that equality and sufficiency are absolute that must be upheld when our hard work efforts are being carried out. Muslims have to maintain their communications with the Creator on their journeys to fulfill their desires. Being careful in interpreting a sweet thing that should not be accepted as a test from God is also very necessary.

CONCLUSION The films *The Pursuit of Happyness* and *Doa yang Mengancam* which represents the lives of a Protestant and a Muslim respectively show significant similarities and differences. Indeed, it can be said that Chris, as a Protestant, has a higher work ethic than Madrim, as a Muslim, when we compare their characterizations in these two films. It is because the meaning of hard work in the Protestant perspective can already be said as a worship of God, unlike that of Islam. However, Protestants, with PWE as their guidelines, have serious implications for materialism. A success in Protestants only focuses on indicators of individual wealth and prosperity as a result of their work ethics. Meanwhile, because emphasizing the narrative of equality between hard work and prayer, IWE as the Muslim guidelines, has an impact on work ethics that is not higher than that of Protestants. However, positively, Muslims have a higher level of religiosity due to the suggestion of equality between worldly wealth and good deeds for the afterlife. Based on these findings, the researchers hope that this research can be continued by comparing literature related to the characters' productivity as a result of their work ethics with a deeper and broader religious vision, such as by associating it with the science of *fiqh*.

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