



**LARRY CROWNE'S OPTIMISM IN ACHIEVING HIGHER EDUCATION
FOR A BETTER LIFE
ON *LARRY CROWNE'S* FILM SCRIPT**

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Larry Crowne's Optimism In Achieving Higher Education For A Better Life

On Larry Crowne's Film Script

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Optimisme merupakan kecerdasan emosional untuk mencapai keberhasilan. Dalam mencapai kehidupan yang lebih baik diperlukan optimism dari dalam diri manusia itu sendiri. Hal tersebut dapat ditemukan dalam skrip film *Larry Crowne*. Peneliti merasa tertarik dalam meneliti lebih dalam mengetahui bagaimana sikap optimisme yang dimiliki oleh tokoh utama untuk mencapai kehidupan yang lebih baik. Untuk mendapatkan hasil yang baik, penulis menggunakan dua metode penelitian yaitu metode penelitian dengan studi pustaka serta metode pendekatan psikologi umum dan eksponensial. Dalam skrip film tersebut digambarkan secara jelas bagaimana tokoh utama membangun sikap optimis serta semangat yang luar biasa untuk meraih kehidupan yang lebih baik. Tokoh utama berusaha keras untuk mendapatkan pekerjaan lagi sambil melanjutkan kuliahnya. Dengan semangatnya yang luar biasa, ia berhasil mendapatkan pekerjaan dan berhasil menyelesaikan kuliahnya dengan sangat baik. Dengan demikian, ia dapat menyelesaikan segala masalah-masalah yang dihadapinya.

Kata Kunci : *Larry Crowne*- Optimisme – Semangat- Mencapai keberhasilan

1. Introduction

Wellek (1997:62) wrote that "Literature represents life; and "life" is, in large measure, a social reality, even though the natural world and the inner or subjective world of the individual have also been objects of literary "imitation". From Wellek's perspective we could say that literature is indeed the result of someone's imagination which is then realized as stories that many people enjoy. Thus literature is often considered artificial life of community. This is the reason why the literary background often becomes the subject to study a community's social life.

There are many elements in a film that have an important role, and one of them is the script. The script does not only tells how a film is told, but also describes the characters, situations and figures in a film script.

From many film scripts, *Larry Crowne* is the only film that wraps those three themes slickly. The main theme of this film is optimism and how the main character drives himself hard to achieve higher education for a better life. Unlike the usual film with the same theme that we ever watch, this film is very different. *Larry Crowne* tells about a man who is not in his young age with average education and faced with the reality that the world only requires someone with a title of higher education at that time. However, he does not lose his hope and still continues persistently his ambition to achieve higher education. Although this main character in this film is faced with a series of problems in his life, he still has the passion to fight for his dream which is achieving higher education for a better life.

2. Methodology

Method of approach is the basic assumption which is made as a set bar in viewing an object (Semi, 1993:93). Sociology and psychology sciences are usually used as a method to review a film. It then generates into two kinds of approach methods which are general psychological approach and the exponential approach. In this case, the writer use psychological approach to explore the psychological aspects contained in the film.

The first method of approach is the method of general psychological approach. Sarwono (2009:3) describes that psychology is the science that studies human behavior in their relation with the environment. One common aspect of psychology that the writer took is about optimism. Meanwhile the second method of approach is exponential approach. According to Gverin (1992:197) "this method of approach is used because the inclusiveness of the term suggests at once the several meanings of motif, image, symbol and archetype".

3. Literary Review

3.1. Intrinsic Aspect

3.1.1. Theme

In the making of film script, theme is important because it is the first step of film making. Theme is the main idea given in a story which is about meaning of life or human circumstance. Theme also contains the opinion of the writer toward various issues in the script. Jacob Sumardjo (1986:56) in his book *Apresiasi Kesusastraan* state that "theme is an idea of a subject matter which is described in several sub topics."

3.1.2. Character

Character is one of the basic elements in an imaginative literature

work. Therefore, a major concern is to analyze the character in a literary work. This is stated by Potter (1967:1), "Characters are basic in much imaginative literature, and therefore they merit the considerable attention paid to them."

3.1.2.1. Main Character

Main character is a character who has the main role in the novel because a main character is told often in the storyline as a person of events or a person who is known by the event (Nurgiyantoro, 1995:177).

3.1.2.2. Minor Character

"Minor character is a character who appears once or few times in the story. This kind of character, at least, is show in a relatively short duration of story" (Nurgiyantoro, 1995:177). Minor character is often mentioned as supporting character that would make the storyline more lively.

3.1.3. Setting

3.1.3.1. Setting of Place

Setting of place is where the event occurs in a story. It can be places with certain names, particular initials or even anonymous. Meanwhile, anonymous locations are usually descriptions of common locations such as village, river, street, forest or town (Nurgiyantoro, 1995:227)

3.1.3.2. Setting of Time

Setting of time is when the event occurs in a story. Nurgiyantoro in his book *Teori Pengkajian Fiksi* tells that setting of time is related with the issue of when the event occurs in a fictional story.

3.1.4. Conflict

Literary work will become less interesting if there is no conflict. Conflict is the important element that must be presented, because it can make a literary work more fascinating. According to Perrine, conflict is defined as a clash in

actions, ideas, intentions and wishes. A conflict may happen between a character and another character, a character and nature, society, or destiny. A conflict may even happen within a character's mind.

3.1.4.1. Internal Conflict

Generally, internal conflict is a mental conflict that happens within the characters' minds. "Internal conflict takes place within a character who struggles with opposing personal mind feelings or with indecision about how to act" (Chin. 2000:1).

3.1.4.2. External Conflict

On the other hand, social conflict is a conflict caused by a social contact between humans in forms of issues such as bullying, clashing, arguments, wars, and other social relationship cases (Nurgiyantoro, 1995:124).

3.2. Extrinsic Aspect

3.2.1. Definition of Optimism

Every human being has something that he or she wants to achieve. In process of achieving it, a human being must try and be optimistic in order to make all of it come true. Optimism is one of the important personality aspects. Optimism makes an individual realize what he or she wants and changes herself or himself soon so it is easier for her or him to cope with the issues. According to Segerstorm (1998:1646), optimism is the way of thinking positively and realistically when it comes to deal with problems.

3.2.2. The characteristic of individual's optimism.

Every individual has his or her own characteristics. Among those characteristics, there is a character of optimism in each individual.

Robinson (1997:1345) states that an optimistic individual rarely suffers depression and achieves success easier in life. They also have faith, great endurance, spirit and confidence.

4. Discussion

4.1. Theme

The main theme of this film is optimism to get a better life. The optimism includes force, sacrifice, patience, passion, and love. This theme is connected to the main character, Larry Crowne. He is fired by Unimart, where he has worked for almost 22 years there. He would be bankrupt if he lost his job career. He is fired because his last education is just Senior high School, while the required education is bachelor. It can be seen in the following dialogue between Larry and his friends:

LARRY CROWNE

Unimart is firing me . . . (Scene 8, Page 8)

COX

Here's the problem: your lack of a graduate degree will forever retard

any move up the management ladder. (Scene 9, Page 9)

STRANG

Because you never went to college you're forever retarded. (Scene 9, Page 9)

4.1.2. Character

4.1.2.1. Main Character

In this film script, Larry Crowne is the main character. It can be seen from his existence along the story of the film. His existence is connected with the setting, plot, and time of the story. Larry is the team leader at Unimart. His style is old fashioned. The text from the script below is the explanation:

LARRY CROWNE- *A man as reliable (and predictable) as that rising sun.*

Actually, he's a Team Leader of this Unimart, dressed in his un-sexy, un-fashionable, un-flattering khaki pants and Company Polo.

Larry has had rangtop down. He wrestles it up, locks cover into place.

He doesn't just walk to work, but strides across the asphalt field like a Sultan of Sales; a Viscount of Discount. (Scene1,page1)

Larry Crowne is a protagonist, humble, friendly, and wise. As we know, protagonist is a hero character who wants to reach his or her aims in the story.

4.1.2.2. Minor Character

- a. Lamarr, he is Larry's neighbor and best friend. He has a wife, Patience, who always helps him in work. Lamarr has a shop which sells second-hand things whose prices are the cheapest ever. Larry always needs his advice for almost every problem that he has. In this case, Lamarr helps Larry to continue his study to East City Community.
- b. Mrs. Mercedes Tainot; she is Larry's teacher of Speech 217 and later his girl friend. Mercy is married. Her husband's name is Dean Tainot.
- c. Talia, she is Larry's Classmate in the Economics class, scooter gang's mate and best friend. Talia is a smart, stylish and independent woman. She is brave enough to leave her school since she thinks that it is not her passion. Then, she opens a cafe. She loves to ride a scooter, to wear, and to mix something old into a fashionable style. Therefore, she changes Larry's fashion style.
- d. Dr. Matsutani; he is Larry's Economics teacher. Dr. Matsutani is disciplinary when he teaches in the class. He does not allow handphone and smoking in his class. Dr. Matsutani likes Larry too since

Larry answer his question in the class according to his book.

- e. Raul and Perry; they are Larry's boss of Perry's Coffee Shop. Raul is a fair boss. He would give fair salary for fair work. Raul is quite disciplined in work. Those minor characters are often mentioned as supporting characters that would make the storyline lively. Most of those minor characters supports the main character, Larry Crowne. Some of them are Larry's friends who always help him.

4.1.3. Setting

4.1.3.1. Setting of Place

- a. Unimart

A flat roof that stretching to the horizon. A vast expanse. A plain of gravel-embedded car, studded with . . . HVAC units and power lines, the kind that service a huge commercial building. In fact this kind of building . . . A UNIMART store. A flagship of saving; a mother lode of low, low prices. 100,000-and-then-some square feet of the Consumer Economy . . . (Scene1,page 1)

Unimart is Larry Crowne's office. He has worked there for almost 22 years before he gets fired. He is the Team Leader and will become the 21st Employee of the Month. The setting of Unimart is the first place in this film and the conflict of Larry Crowne begins from here. Larry is fired there.

- b. East City Community College

East City Community College is Larry's college. He enrolls there by his neighbor's suggestion. He takes two classes in the first term, which are Speech 217 and Economics.

EXT. EAST CITY COMMUNITY COLLEGE – MORNING

The sign reads "Enroll Now! \$15 per unit!" (Scene22,page 20)

- c. Street

Street is a setting in this film script too. After Larry has a scooter and join Talia's scooter gang, he always goes riding with

his friends. Some action is on the street too, where Mercedes Tainot sit alone in the bus station; then Larry, Talia, and Dell Gordo come along to her.

EXT. STREET – LATER

Larry and Talia. Scooting along like Elvis and Ann-Margaret in Viva Las Vegas (Scene51,page 44)

d. Perry's Coffee Shop

Perry's Coffee Shop is a place where Larry works. He tries to apply for a job there in the first time but Perry rejects him because his brother in law, Carlos and Nick, already works there. However, Raul calls Larry to work at his coffee shop on the next day after he sees Carlos and Nick unable to handle the kitchen well.

EXT. PERRY'S COFFEE SHOP – SAME

Larry is seated at the counter. PERRY pours him coffee as RAUL—the head cook – is taking from the service window. CARLOS and NICK are in the back. (Scene18,page17)

4.1.3.2. Setting of Time

Setting of time in this film script, if reviewed from the year aspect which indicates the interaction between the characters is not clearly stated. However from the writer's perspective the time setting is in the beginning of the 21st century. This can be viewed from the scene that shows the picture or frame of flat tv and East Community College Catalogue in the year 2006.

EXT. DERBY COURT - LATER

Larry is carrying his Flat Screen TV, wires, box and all,from his house to Lamarr's garage (Scene 31, page 27)
(SEARCHING BOOKS)

An education.

He finds a East City Community College Catalog 2006. Tosses it to Larry. (Scene 21, page 19)

The time setting in this film script also takes place at most in the day time rather than in night time to visualize the routine that the characters do in this film script.

EXT. MEGA-SAVE - MORNING

Larry is with the first customers of the day, dressed to impress in those well-ironed clothes. He strides right in to the giant store (Scene 15, page 14)

EXT. UNIMART PARKING LOT - AFTERNOON

Vasquez helps Larry put down the ragged top of his car. (Scene6, page6)

4.1.4. Conflict

4.1.4.1. Internal Conflict

In this case, Larry Crowne has internal conflict with his career. His conflicts begin when Unimart would be reconstructed. The staff in the Front Office worry about their positions. It means that there should be a solution. Strang, one of the Front Officers, suggests an idea to save his and his partner's career. His idea is firing someone. It could be that he wants a high position in Unimart. Then, he thinks that he has to fire the Team Leader, Larry Crowne. The reason is that Larry does not have a bachelor degree although Larry has worked there for almost 22 years and he is the 21st Employee of the Month in Unimart. Larry does not believe it. Then, he straightly thinks that he would lose his house.

LARRY CROWNE

I thought I was Employee of the Month.

STRANG

In a way, you are.

Larry can't believe this. Nor can he move

LARRY CROWNE

No. No. No. No. No. No. No. No. No. No. No. No. I'm going to lose my house...(Scene10,page 9)

LARRY CROWNE

I'm hoping not to lose my house

LAURIE GAMMELGAARD

You're carrying what on the house? (Scene12,page 12)

4.1.4.2. External Conflict

In Larry Crowne film script, Larry faces other problems that appear after he is fired. He has to save his house and pay some obligation to his ex-wife, Denise. After he gets a new job to fulfill his necessity, Larry calls Denise to make a deal about his obligation. He is going to miss few months on the checks for the house. He does everything to solve his problem but it is not enough. Denise does not care about his problem. She says that the deal is the deal and it is the consequences for Larry to take.

LARRY CROWNE

I tried. I'm too much of a risk.

DENISE

Oh, I'm not touching that. I don't want to open up the whole lawyer thing, but I will if pushed. Sucks, doesn't it? I appreciate the rigorous Crowne honesty, but this can't happen. (Scene56,page48)

4.2. EXTRINSIC ASPECT

4.2.1. Larry Crowne's Optimism

Since he gets fired, he has to continue his education to college to get a better career. The bad situation makes Larry do his best for his life. Being fired from Unimart makes him down. He has worked there for almost 22 years and he always becomes the Employee of the Month. His achievement there proves that his existence as employer is great. Because Unimart is going to be reconstructed and someone must be fired, his Office friends, without considering Larry as their senior purpose to their manager to fire him. They only think about their position in the office. Therefore, someone should be sacrificed.

After being fired, the first thing that Larry does is going to the Riverbank, looking at his own records. The Bank assesses that his house is worth \$ 291, 987 while his loan from the bank is \$700, 000 which means trouble for Larry. He is going to lose his house. However, the Riverbank gives an

alternative solution for Larry. He must to get a new job and the bank will evaluate his situation again:

(THE BROCHURE)

In a few weeks your financial base will tell us what we can do. Find new employment. Liquidate everything low on the Value Index.

Stick to a budget. Clip coupons, buy in bulk, you know the drill.

Then come back and we'll work with you. (Scene13,page 12)

Larry tries to do the plan of the Riverbank. His optimism to rise up from his failure is the major passion that he has. He goes home and then opens his laptop computer, searching for an on-line job application. He comes across that part of any application that will forever be daunting to him. He enters his data but he cannot enter the education / college data. He looks about to give up but then he thinks and stands more.

Finally, Larry shares his problem with Lamarr, Lamarr suggests that he go to college. Lamarr gives him a brochure of East City Community College.

LAMARR

An education.

He finds a East City Community College Catalog 2006. Tosses it to Larry

LAMARR (CONT'D)

Get some knowledge and you'll be fire proof.

LARRY CROWNE

Aren't there unemployed engineers and geophysicists? (scene 21, page 19)

At home, Larry thinks about continuing his education to college. He thinks about the cost that he has to pay. He is optimistic if he continue his education, he will get a better life because his knowledge and skill can be better. The advice from Lamarr comes out with good result. On the next day, he goes there. He takes some subjects that are

related to his career. He officially takes college at East City Community College. Larry looks for a job and applies for a place as a student at East City Community College. Even though he is no longer young, he is optimistic that he can follow the subject of the class. He always learns the subjects at college. He is almost never absent. He is only absent for one time in Speech 217 because he joins the Economics class. Larry's reason for being absent from Speech 217 is that he thinks the Economics Class is also important for his career later.

Larry's spirit to go to college is huge. He never misses any opportunity. He is never a lazy student. He always re-learns the subject whenever he has opportunity to learn. Larry becomes a clever student although he is an old man. Larry joins Dr. Matsutani's Economics class. At the first meeting, Dr. Matsutani promises his student that they will be successful after joining his class.

He always reads and learns Dr. Matsutani's Economics books. By learning and reading the book, his knowledge is going to be better. He also can understand about Economy which will support his career later. The fact that Larry has already read Dr. Matsutani's book is shown when he can answer Dr. Matsutani's question in class:

LARRY CROWNE

Breaking even is not making profit, it's a theoretical assumption.

Economics abhors an assumption.

DR. MATSUTANI

Someone's been reading my book. (scene 51, page 44)

His lecturers are very proud of Larry's optimism, because it can makes Larry always tries to read and learn the materials that he accepts in his Speech 217 and Economics class. Over all, Larry Crowne's life continues better than before.

4.2.2. Larry Crowne's Better Life

While studying, Larry is still looking for a job. Larry's fortune comes the next couple of days when Raul looks at his kitchen and finds that it has become so messy because his brothers in law, Carlos and Nick, cannot work well. Raul calls Larry to work there. Larry gets a job. His spirit of looking for a job is big. He never stops until he gets a job. He works at Perry's Coffee Shop as chef. His optimism to change life by continuing his education to college turns out well even though his salary on Perry's Coffee Shop is not as big as that in Unimart. Besides, the fee is quite enough to fulfill his necessity. Larry also asks his boss Raul whether he can go to college and shift the time to work when he has a class.

LARRY CROWNE

Boss, I don't want to quit school.

RAUL

So don't

He becomes a smart student at Dr. Matsutani class. It is shown when Larry can finish the final test earlier than the other students. Dr. Matsutani knows about Larry's potential. He cares about Larry's development. He is proud of Larry eventhough Larry is an old man. Larry's spirit to learn something new and difficult for his age does not make him surrender.

He just does the duties as a student. When he delivers his speech at the post test of Speech 217, he gets an A plus. Mrs. Tainot, herself tells him about his score. He never expects that. This dialogue proves his optimism to have better education.

His progress at college is great. After Mercedes lets Larry know his score at Speech 217, she encourages him to continue his education. The following is the dialogue:

MERCEDES TAINOT

I hope you continue your education. Back to East City. You've made such a good start.

LARRY CROWNE

I'll have to see. (Scene 110, page 93)

Larry becomes more excited after Mercedes Tainot gives him spirit to continue his education. He goes to East City Community College to take many subjects because his optimism to get better education is recognized. Dr. Matsutani tells Mercedes that Larry tells him that joining Mrs. Mercedes class of Speech 217 can change his life. Mercedes is surprised to hear that.

His optimism can make him better than in the past and not afraid of failure. Even though in the process of achieving his better life he ever fails for many times in applying for a job, he keeps trying. Optimism pushes Larry to think positively to achieve the best from the worst situation (after being fired). He does optimally everything to get better life. He gets a job as chef at Perry's Coffee Shop and goes to school at East City College. He gets A score and has spirit from Mercedes Tainot who believes in his ability. His optimism could help to increase his psychological health, to have good feeling, to make logical solution and to be confident.

Larry Crowne has good characteristics and he is also a good man. He never leaves his responsibility as a student and as a worker. He always thinks positively to deal with anything. Larry always thinks about how to pay the allowance to his ex-wife, because his salary cannot cover the loan. Finally, because there is no option, Larry must allow his house to be sold in order to pay the allowance money. Consequently, he has to move to a little apartment until his allowance money gets paid. He is still able to have good life.

Because of his optimism to get better life, Larry can reach higher education to get better in his career and the best thing in his life is that he finds his new love. He is optimistic to rise up after failure and bankrupt. He has power and support

from Lamarr and himself. Mercedes Tainot believes that Larry is her true love. They become a happy couple to continue their life.

5. Conclusion

All of these are shown by Larry Crowne that he is able to get better life by deciding to continue his education.

Although it is difficult, Larry Crowne keeps trying to make himself able to pay bills from the bank and to get better job. Larry's optimism is shown when he gets fired from his job and he has to pay bills from the bank. Suggested by Lamar, Larry tries to arise from his devastation because he just gets fired. He tries to apply jobs in various places. However, Larry fails because his education is only Senior High. He thinks about the way of paying all of his bills though it is not possible for him to sell his house.

Although he experiences great self-struggle inside, Larry tries to share his story with his neighbor and best friend, Lamar. Lamar suggests that Larry continue his education in East Community College. All night long, Larry thinks about whether he goes with Lamar's advice or not. Strong determination makes Larry to continue his education. The study which Larry takes at that time is Economics 1 and Speech 217. The material which is given is very useful and changes Larry's life. Then, he also joins the scooter gang with Talia. His life starts to go to a better direction.

Larry's huge passion to change his life and all the means that can support him achieving his success such as continuing his education until university degree shape his optimism attitude to realize what he wants. Because of his great passion, Larry could work at Perry's Coffee Shop and finish Economics and Speech 217's examination well so he gets

A. Larry also can continue his education in the university and work at Perry's Coffee Shop. In this matter, Larry applies the optimistic attitude in his life so he can easily achieve success and get better life.

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