MORAL VALUES OF EDWARD’S TALL TALES
REVEALED THROUGH THE CHARACTERIZATION OF
EDWARD BLOOM IN JOHN AUGUST’S BIG FISH MOVIE
SCRIPT

AN UNDERGRADUATE THESIS

Presented a Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Sarjana Sastra
in English Letters

By
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Student Number: 074214038

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DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LETTERS
FACULTY OF LETTERS
SANATA DHARMA UNIVERSITY
YOGYAKARTA
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Defended before the Board of Examiners
On August 25, 2014
and Declared Acceptable

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I certify that this undergraduate thesis contains no material which has been previously submitted for the award of any other degree at any university, and that, to the best of my knowledge, this undergraduate thesis contains no material previously written by any other person except where due reference is made in the text of the undergraduate thesis.

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I wanted a perfect ending.

Now I've learned, the hard way, that some poems don't rhyme, and some stories don't have a clear beginning, middle, and end. Life is about not knowing, having to change, taking the moment and making the best of it, without knowing what's going to happen next.

Gilda Radner
For My Parents
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ABSTRACT


As one type of fiction, stories are the most effective way of convincing and uniting people under an idea. It also provides moralistic view through the existence of the protagonist and antagonist that are influencing our judgment of some acts. This is a study on a movie about storytelling. Through this study on the movie script, the researcher tries to share her awe on the character of Edward Bloom, that successfully changed many people’s way of life in a better way throughout his life journey.

The researcher formulates two questions in reaching the objectives of the study. The first problem formulation analyzes the characterization of the main character, Edward Bloom. The characterization that is discussed only from inside the tall tales here will reveal Edward’s characteristics as the protagonist of the tales. The last question is about the moral values of the tall tales revealed from the characterization and the characteristics of Edward.

This study is a library research. The primary source is the movie script written by John August entitled Big Fish. The other sources for the study are mainly from books, encyclopedias, theses, articles, and internet, which contain the necessary theories and information for the study. There are several theories that the researcher used in answering all the questions in the study; the theories of characters and characterization, theory of story, theory of moral, and theories of virtues. For the approach, the researcher used moral-philosophical approach as the most appropriate approach in analyzing moral values of the tall tales.

The result of the analysis in this study shows that Edward Bloom as the main character told the stories of his life in the form of tall tales. He made himself the protagonist and he made the protagonist a virtuous person. He made a hero with virtuous traits to be an admired figure, an example for his son. Due to the moralistic nature that stories have in general and from the kind of character Edward put himself in, the storytelling activity can be considered a moral education and that the moral value of the tall tales is the benefit of being a virtuous person.
ABSTRAK


Kajian ini merupakan penelitian kepustakaan. Sumber utamanya adalah naskah film berjudul Big Fish yang ditulis oleh John August. Sumber lainnya diambil dari buku-buku, ensiklopedia, skripsi, artikel-artikel, dan internet, yang memuat teori dan informasi yang dibutuhkan dalam kajian ini. Ada beberapa teori yang peneliti gunakan untuk menjawab pertanyaan-pertanyaan di kajian ini; teori mengenai tokoh dan penokohan, teori cerita, teori moral, dan teori mengenai kebajikan. Untuk pendekatanannya, peneliti menggunakan pendekatan filsafat moral sebagai pendekatan yang paling tepat dalam menganalisa nilai-nilai moral yang terkandung dalam dongeng-dongeng tersebut.

Hasil analisa dalam kajian ini menunjukkan bahwa tokoh Edward Bloom menceritakan kisah hidupnya dalam bentuk dongeng. Dia membuat dirinya sendiri menjadi protagonisnya dan dia membuat karakter protagonis tersebut orang yang bajik. Dia membuat seorang pahlawan yang memiliki sifat-sifat bajik untuk menjadi sosok yang dikagumi, sebagai teladan untuk anak lelakinya. Merujuk pada sifat moral yang dimiliki oleh fiksi dan dari jenis karakter yang dia buat sebagai dirinya sendiri, aktivitas mendongeng ini bisa dianggap sebagai sebuah pendidikan moral dan nilai moral yang terkandung di dalam dongeng-dongeng tersebut adalah manfaat dari menjadi orang bajik.
CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the Study

Film is the youngest art invented within the modern era, with photography as one of its parents. Unlike photography, which provides the viewer only with one frame of picture, film provides series of motion pictures, with extra point in the technology of sounds added to it so those pictures can speak up and tell stories to the viewer.

The basic of films is the guideline called movie script. Both film and movie script can be regarded as a work of art and literature. According to Gerard Mast in his essay “Literature and Film”

Films are works—indeed works of art—sequential, patterned, temporal wholes that begin an end and, progressing from beginning to end, elaborate some kind of content. As works, films are analogous to plays, novels, poems, and essays, the specific kinds of works implied by the general study of literature (Mast, 1982:285).

Like the other kinds of works of literature, film can also carry messages from their various portrayals of environment, social condition, relationship, and fantasy. A movie script of a narrative film, the kind of film equated with fictional story telling, can possibly be read with the same level of interest as reading a novel, as they share some similarities in their ways of telling stories. While it can be read as a novel, movie script can be treated and analyzed like a play script of a play without neglecting its particular elements.

Since there are similarities between literature and movie script, that movie scripts can be read like novels and can be treated and analyzed as play scripts, the
researcher find it interesting to study a movie script. The script analyzed in this study is *Big Fish*, written by John August. It is based on the novel *Big Fish: A Novel of Mythic Proportions* by Daniel Wallace. The main story of the script is about the relationship of a man and his father.

The story of this movie script is beautiful. The main idea is that there was a man who had a hard time to truly understand his father and wanted to change it. The reason for their inability to know each other was because of the father’s stories. The stories told by the father, Edward Bloom, were not some ordinary stories. They were tall stories, as many southerners of America tell their stories, that are humorously exaggerated and spiced up to be entertaining to the listeners/readers. William Bloom, the son, recognized these stories as some mere tall tales. As the story progressed, it could be seen that there was a story within the story and that the father was not lying to make himself out better, but was trying to tell the truth more beautifully. It is interesting to let people know the value of the stories in this work, what moral values carried behind the unbelievable tall tales through the character of Edward Bloom.

The researcher finds it interesting on how the tall tales Edward told changed people around him. Because of that, the researcher tries to find the moral values behind the tales and the storytelling act. For revealing the moral values carried inside the tall tales, the researcher explores it through Edward’s characterization and the researcher acquires the moral values that are carried through the tall tales by considering the nature of story.
B. Problem Formulation

To reveal the moral values of the story, the problems are formulated as follows:

1. What are the characteristics of Edward Bloom and how are they characterized in the tall tales?
2. What are the moral values of the tall tales revealed from the characterization of Edward Bloom?

C. Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study are to understand the character and characterization of Edward Bloom and to figure out the moral values of the tall tales, and from that find the moral values of the storytelling. The objective is to be achieved by identifying the characterization of Edward Bloom and then finding the significant characteristics from the tales, analyze the way his characteristics are characterized in the tales and after that figure out the value behind the story. From them the researcher will conclude the moral value of the tall tales.

D. Definition of Terms

To have more understanding on the title and to avoid obscurity, the researcher will explain the key terms used throughout this study.

1. Tall Tales

According to Longman Dictionary of English and Culture, tall tale is “a story that exaggerates” (exaggerates means make events and things seem larger, better, or worse than they actually were) (1992: 1418). From the Encyclopedia Britannica, tall tale is “narrative that depicts the wild adventures of extravagantly
exaggerated folk heroes” (2008). From the two descriptions, tall tale is a story that is meant to be entertaining for the audience. Because of that, it exaggerated from the real story or events, a long and complicated story that is difficult to believe because most of the events it describes seem unlikely or impossible.

2. Movie Script

Movie Script is another term used to refer to Screenplay. It is the basis of every movie, like play script for a play. In People Who Make Movies by Theodore Taylor, Script is explained as a story for a movie in the special form required by those who make the movie (Taylor, 1967: 126). Script or screenplay is written by a screenwriter, or scriptwriter, who is often the individual who generates the idea for a narrative film, either as an original concept or as an adaptation of a story, novel, or historical or current event. The screen writer presents that early concept or material in a treatment, a short prose description of the action and major characters of the story that gradually expands to a complete screenplay or script (Wood, 2012: 21).

3. Moral Value

Moral, according to Longman Dictionary of English and Culture, means a piece of guidance on how to live one’s life, how to act more effectively etc., that can be learnt from a story or event (1992: 909). Value is the usefulness, helpfulness, or importance of something, especially in comparison with other things (1992: 1522). In other words moral value can be understood as the usefulness, the importance of a piece of guidance on how to live one’s life, to act more effectively, that can be learnt from a story or event.
CHAPTER II

THEORETICAL REVIEWS

A. Review of Related Studies

Similar to this study, a study entitled *The Moral Values Reflected through Doc’s Characteristics in John Steinbeck’s Cannery Row* examined the moral values reflected through the main characters. The main character is examined by using theory of character and characterization, and the moral values revealed using the theory of moral values are friendship and love. These moral values are revealed through Doc’s characterization in the book.

The moral values of Doc’s Characteristics are divided into two: friendship and love. The moral values in his friendship are caring, loyalty, patience and sharing. In love, we can see that there are three moral values. They are respect, forgiving and responsibility (2004: 49).

The researcher takes the same topic, moral values with this study. The difference is the study the researcher conduct is intended to reveal moral values of the tall tales that are discovered through the characterization of the main character, the way he live inside the tales and in reality, instead of merely from the characterization.

An explicit review on the movie Big Fish also underlines the arbitrariness of the story. A film review: *Hook, Line, and Sinker: A Life of Telling Tall Tales* written by A. O. Scott, a film critics from The New York Times’s site. His review of *Big Fish* is a different perspective of seeing the character of Edward Bloom. He insists that the film persuades us to choose the maudlin moonshine over
engagement with the difficulties of real life. From his point of view, we could say that Scott sides with Will Bloom in this case. Scott stated his opinion, “his stories are so labored, so self-flattering and ultimately so pointless that it is hard not to feel some sympathy for Will, who grew up in his father’s shadow and, for much of his childhood, in his absence.” He also said that the film had blurred the vision of America during the story, of the South in particular, and making them into a warm happy glow four decades.

The film insists on viewing its hero as an affectionate, irrepressible raconteur. From where I sat, he looked more like an incorrigible narcissist and also, perhaps, a compulsive liar, whose love for others is little more than overflowing self-infatuation. But all this might be forgivable—everyone else in the picture thinks so—if Edward were not also a bit of a bore (Scott, “Hook, Line and Sinker: A Life of Telling Tall Tales” 2003).

For another comparison, there is also a preface of the Big Fish movie script written by its own screenwriter, John August. He talked about the process of the screenwriting and the struggle he faced in making the story alive.

Every screenwriting book will tell you that voice-over is the mark of bad filmmaking. By that standard, BIG FISH is awful. There is a ton of voice-over, by a total of four characters. In its defense, this is a movie about storytelling. There are obviously going to be moments where a character's in-scene dialogue will carry over into voice-over. However, in most cases the voice-over has very little to do with the scene it's playing over. Instead, it's giving you information that you couldn't get just through images alone, usually Edward’s perspective on what’s really important (August, “History of Big Fish” 2003)

The review above shows that Big Fish is a movie about storytelling, a story of a storyteller. There are four storytellers that tell a series of a story about the life of a hero, one of the storytellers. The review’s content is procedural and technical. August was trying to fit the story from the book to be a cinematic story that was rich with cinematic quality.
There was one time when he met the writer of the novel, Daniel Wallace to talk about the story and tried to solve the mysteries. And the conversation turned out to be a form of invitation for August to make the story become whatever he wanted.

Was the Witch really Jenny Hill? Who was the Girl in the River? Wallace had answers, but more impressively, he didn't insist on being right. Everything was open for interpretation. He didn't see anything in his book as being sacred and untouchable (August, “History of Big Fish” 2003).

From the review, it can be understood why the story from the book was very different from the movie script. The script was made based on August’s interpretation of what the characters would be if the story flew on screen. He added some characters to help the story flow more naturally and it turned out perfect. Wallace, the original writer, was so impressed with the script he was inspired to be a screenwriter himself.

Similar to the first study, though it comes from different work of literature, this study also examines the moral values through the main character. The second is a review of the main character, Edward in a very different perspective from this study, the writer of the review ‘takes side’ with Will Bloom while the researcher is likely to side with Edward. The last study is also talking about the same work of literature, but it was talking more on the making and the opinion of the writer himself rather than talking about the content. This study is trying to reveal the moral values of the storytelling and the tales. The researcher is dealing with the character of Edward and she will explore the answer from the characterization of Edward only.
B. Review of Related Theories

A movie script of a narrative film, the kind of film equated with fictional story telling, can possibly be read with the same level of interest as reading a novel, as they share some similarity in their ways of telling stories.

Like a novel, a narrative film is a narrated fiction, controlled by a narrative voice, a teller (the camera lens) that let us see only what it wishes. And like a novel, a film is capable of leaping nimbly in time and space, a common characteristic of narrated fictions. (Mast, 1982: 288)

While it can be read as a novel, movie script can be treated and analyzed like a play script of a play.

Like a play and unlike a novel, a film is a sort of performance art, presented for a group of persons gathered together at a specific place and time. Like other performance arts, a film is usually limited to the amount of time it is believed that people wish to spend. Unlike a novel, then, a feature film must be compact, its length even closer to that of a concert or dance program than to the 2½-hour play. And like a play, a film concretely presents scenes between physical beings rather than between abstract “characters,” beings who seem to be enacting their thoughts and feelings directly for us. (Mast, 1982: 288)

Therefore, the theories used in analyzing the movie script are taken from the theories used for analyzing play script.

To find out how Edward Bloom’s character characterized, the researcher uses two theories: theory of character and theory of characterization. To analyze the moral values from the tall tales the researcher will use the theory of virtue, theory of story and theory of moral.
1. Theory of Character

According to M. H. Abrams in *A Glossary of Literary Terms*, character is a person presented in a work and the person is interpreted by the reader through his speech and action.

Characters are the persons represented in a dramatic or narrative work, who are interpreted by the reader as being endowed with particular moral, intellectual, and emotional qualities by inferences from what the persons say and their distinctive ways of saying it—the dialogue—and from what they do—the action (Abrams, 1999: 32-33).

The quotation above also explain that a character in a work usually interpreted by the reader through his dialogue, action, and motivation. Motivation means character’s temperament, desires, and moral nature for their speech and actions. Furthermore, based on the role, character can be categorized into two parts:

a. Major Character

A major character is the most important or central person on the story. Usually, the story is always focused on this character from the beginning to the end (Abrams, 1981: 20);

b. Minor Character

Minor characters appear in a certain setting to support and become the background of the major character because they are not fully developed and just help the major character to reveal his characterization to the readers (Abrams, 1981: 20);

In this story, there are two major characters: they are Edward Bloom, the central person that tells the tall tales, and his son William Bloom, the “confused
victim” of his father’s tall tale. The story mainly revolves around these two in various age appearances.

Another theorization of characters is postulated by Reaske, in his book *How to Analyze Drama*. According to Reaske, characters can also be characterized from their action, development, and from their relationship to other characters.

a. Character in Action

We learn a great deal about the characters in a play by closely observing their actions. Characters usually do things for certain reasons. We do not discuss their motivation, because they complete acts which are almost totally unmotivated and are therefore to be explained in some other way; namely, in terms of what is fundamental about them (Reaske, 1966: 48).

b. The Development of the Characters

Our main concern is to analyze a character’s motivation for acting as he does; then we concentrate on the devices of characterization employed by the dramatist to “educate” us with regards to the nature of the characters (Reaske, 1966: 48).

c. The Character’s Relationship to Other Characters

Part of the character’s development is based on the changing nature of his relationship with other characters. The character’s relationship to other characters emerges in both speech between them, speeches about each other, and, most evidently, in the actions which they share or cause one another to take (Reaske, 1966: 48-49).
For the summary. Reaske stated that:

After all the characters can be seen in their pattern and in their relationships, they can be isolated for individual analysis. By beginning with a consideration of the character in action—that is, explaining what happens to that character in the course of the play—and then suggesting reasons for that action (motivation), the student can fairly rapidly discover the central truths of the character (Reaske, 1966: 49).

2. Theory of Characterization

Reaske in *How to Analyze Drama*, stated that “Characters, to begin with, are fictitious creations and thus the dramatist and the novelist may both be judged with regard to their ability in the art of characterization” (Reaske, 1966: 40). According to Reaske, in order to understand the characters from the characterization, characterization can be differed from these 6 devices of characterization:

a. The Appearance of the Character

In the mere appearance of character, the physical sense, the look, the way he/she walks, the way he/she dresses, etc., we locate our first understanding of him (Reaske, 1966: 46).

b. Asides and Soliloquies

We learn about the characters as they speak. And, specifically, we are apt to understand the characters best when they speak in short asides or in longer soliloquies. The use of soliloquies and asides is one of the most expert devices of characterization (Reaske, 1966: 46).

c. Dialogue between Characters

Not only does the language of the character speaking alone characterize him/her, but his/her language when speaking to others also sheds a great deal of light on his personality (Reaske, 1966: 47).
d. Hidden Narration

One of the devices of characterization frequently employed is having one character in a play narrate something about another character. The narration is hidden in the sense that it is not the playwright’s direct comment. There is a great interplay between the playwright’s characterizations of certain people in the play through the use of hidden narrations made by one character about another (Reaske, 1966: 47).

e. Language

The way a character speaks and the expressions he uses should always be our first concern. This aspect of characterization is without doubt the most important—and the playwright as well as the critic is well aware of this truth (Reaske, 1966: 47-48).

f. Character in Action

Motivation usually translates into action in the real world and there is no reason to assume that the same does not hold true in the world of the characters on the stage (Reaske, 1966: 48).

3. Theory of Story

Story, as seen in Longman Dictionary of English Language and Culture, is an account of events, real or imagined (2005: 1374). Humans are creatures of story, so story touches nearly every aspect of their lives.

Archeologists dig up clues in the stones and bones and piece them together into a saga about the past. Historians, too, are storytellers. Some argue that many of the accounts in school textbooks, like the standard story of Columbus’s discovery of America, are so rife with distortions and omission that they are closer to myth than history (Gottschall, 2012: 15).
Stories come to us in various forms, mostly from books. Though we read less than we used to, we still have not forsaken fiction. On-screen stories: films and television have been replacing the printed version of stories. “Almost all of our time in theaters and in front of DVD players is story time, and television remains largely a fiction delivery technology” (Gottschall, 2012: 9). Human beings love stories. They put stories everywhere. Not only in books, films, and plays, but also in songs, news articles, cartoons, and videogames. There seems to be a general human curiosity about how other lives, both real and imaginary take shape and unfold (Kennedy, 2010: 5).

Fiction (from the Latin fictio, “a shaping, a counterfeiting”) is a name for stories not entirely factual, but at least partially shaped, made up, imagined (Kennedy, 2010: 5). There are varieties of fiction: fable, parable, and tale. Fable is a brief, often humorous narrative told to illustrate a moral. The characters in a fable are often animals which represent specific human qualities. Another traditional form of storytelling is parable. Like fable, a parable is a brief narrative that teaches a moral, but unlike a fable, its plot is plausibly realistic, and the main characters are human rather than anthropomorphized animals or natural forces. A fable customarily ends by explicitly stating its moral, but parables often present their morals implicitly, and their meanings can be open to several interpretations (Kennedy, 2010: 9).

The last is Tale. The name tale (from the Old English talu, “speech”) is sometimes applied to any story, whether short or long, true or fictitious. Due to tale’s being a more evocative name than story, writers sometimes calls their
stories “tales” as if to imply something handed down from the past. But defined in a more limited sense, a tale is a story, usually short, that sets forth strange and wonderful events in more or less bare summary, without detailed character-drawing. *Tale* is pretty much synonymous with *yarn*, for it implies a story in which the goal is revelation of the marvelous rather than revelation of character.

There are some types of tales; fairy tales, which are set in a world of magic and enchantment, and tall tales. Tall tales are a variety of folk story that recounts the deeds of a superhero or of the storyteller. If the storyteller is describing his or her own imaginary experience, the bragging yarn is usually told with a straight face to listeners who take pleasure in scoffing at it (Kennedy, 2010: 11).

Based on the theory above, the researcher are using the terms “tale” instead of “story” in referring to the stories that was reciting Edward’s past life journey. The tales in this study are also exaggerated in a way that it would be logical to put it in the category of tall tales. The term “story” is used in carrying the tales as a whole.

People tell stories for many reasons, including the sheer egoistical delight of talking, but probably most of the best storytelling proceeds from one of two more commendable desires: a desire to entertain or a desire to instruct (Barnet, 1993: 28).

According to Gottschall, “Human minds yield helplessly to the suction of story. No matter how hard we concentrate, no matter how deep we dig in our heels, we just can resist the gravity of alternate worlds,” (Gottschall, 2012: 3). Story’s role in human’s lives extends far beyond conventional novels or films. Story, and variety of storylike activities, dominates human’s live. People like
following a richly characterized lead protagonist through the struggles of his/her lives.

Stories are used is everyday life, people fictionalize their memory so it becomes a story to tell a friend when they meet one. Stories are found in every conversation, jokes, and urban legends. It leads to a point that “the human imperative to make and consume stories runs even more deeply than literature, dreams, fantasy. We soaked to the bone in story,” (Gottschall, 2012: 18). People who are smart enough in knowing this are using stories to make something more entertaining, more easy to receive, more convincing, in every aspects like commercials, sports, business, and even in court.

In analyzing the significance of story in this study, it is important to compare another story’s importance in other field. One of the most valid evidence of stories significance can be seen in the form of religion.

Flip through the holy books of the three great monotheism—Judaism, Christianity, and Islam—and you will be flipping through anthologies of theories: the Fall, the Flood, Sodom and Gomorrah, Abraham, Isaac, the crucifixion and resurrection of Christ, the Archangel Gabriel seizing Muhammad by the throat and revealing that Allah created man from a clot of blood. Take away the lists of begettings, the strings of “thou shalt” and “thou shalt nots” (one writer puts the number of biblical commandments not at ten, but at more like seven hundred), the instruction on how to sacrifice animals and how to build an ark, and you have a collection of intense narratives about the biggest stuff in human life (Gottschall, 2012: 117).

Not only in monotheism is the basic of religion built on stories, major and minor religions, folklore of traditional people also have the similar pattern. Read through them and the dominant story type will be myths explaining why things are the way they are. In traditional societies, truths about the spirit world were conveyed not through lists or essays—they were conveyed through story. The
world’s priests and shamans knew what psychology would later confirm: if you
want a message to burrow into a human mind, work it into a story (Gottschall,
2012: 118).

As the sacred fiction, Religion is the ultimate expression of story’s
dominion over our minds. “We have religion because, by nature, we abhor
explanatory vacuums. In sacred fiction, we find the master confabulations of the
storytelling mind,” (Gottschall, 2012: 120-121). “That explains the growing
number of religious believers in this age of science and genomics,” (Gottschall,
2012: 121). There are also good things about religion, including the way its
ethical teachings bind people into more harmonious collectives.

There are also national myths that serve the same function as supernatural
myths in binding role to society. In retelling how Columbus found America, the
typical American will give the answer of the name of the three ships, the fact that
he discovered America by sailing the ocean in 1492 and that he proved the earth
was round, not flat. But it was mostly fiction, instead of history, it is a story that is
simply wrong in most details and misleading in the rest. “It represent determined
forgetting—an erasure of what is shameful from their national memory banks so
that history can function as a unifying, patriotic myth” (Gottschall, 2012: 124).
Gottschall also write that most history is remade to a unifying story of the United
States.

Stories about Columbus, Squanto, and the first Thanksgiving, George
Washington’s inability to lie, and so on, serve as national creation myths. The men at
the center of these stories are presented not as flesh-and-blood humans with flaws
to match their virtues, but as the airbrushed leading men of hero stories. The purpose
of these myths is not to provide an objective account of what happened. It is to tell a
story that binds a
community together—to take *pluribus* and make *unum* (Gottschall, 2012: 124).

Westerners are a very good mythmaker, spinning the fact that they are the conqueror with power and many indigenous societies are wiped out by their rapacious traits. “They made the myths that tell their people that not only are they the good guys, but they are the smartest, boldest, best guys that ever were,” (Gottschall, 2012: 125).

From the two examples of how stories affect people in their two major aspects in life; religion and nationalism, an assumption can be drawn. Stories are the most effective way of convincing an idea and uniting a group of people under that idea. Ignoring the value of the stories, those example provides the function of stories in instructing people.

Another importance of stories is stories provide moralistic view. At first, “Plato banished poets and storytellers from his ideal republic for, among other sins, peddling immoral fare” (Gottschall, 2012: 130). Plato was just the first in a long string of panic attacks of people who believed that fiction was corroding morality of the youth through dime novels, comics, moving pictures, television and video games, turning them slothful, aggressive, and perverted. Nevertheless, he was wrong for fiction is intensely moralistic. “Yes, evil occurs, and antiheroes, from Milto’s Satan to Tony Soprano, captivate us. But fiction virtually always puts us in a position to judge wrongdoing, and we do so with gusto,” (Gottschall, 2012: 130).

People’s concern in whether the character in the story will get what they want or not is the cause of the adjustment of their emotion to the stories. The
existence of the protagonist and antagonist are influencing our judgment of some acts.

As the literary scholar William Flesch shows in his book Comeuppance, much of the emotion generated by a story—the fear, hope, and suspense—reflects our concern over whether the characters, good and bad, will get what they deserve. Mostly they do, but sometimes they don’t. And when they don’t, we close our books with a sigh, or trudge away from the theater, knowing that we have just experienced a tragedy (Gottschall, 2012: 131-132).

Though the amount of violence and aggression that come from some fictions are countless, fiction almost never gives us morally neutral presentation of violence.

When the villain kills, his or her violence is condemned. Whe the hero kills, he or she does so righteously. Fiction drives home the message that violence is acceptable only under clearly defined circumstances—to protect the good and the weak from the bad and the strong (Gottschall, 2012: 132).

“Most of the fiction is moral fiction; it puts us in the position of approving of decent, prosocial behavior and disapproving of the greed of antagonist—of characters who are belly and balls,” (Gottschall, 3012: 132). Beneath all of its great fiction techniques, stories tend to preach and their sermons are usually conventional. Most popular story forms—mainstream films, network television, video games, and genre novels—are still structured on poetic justice; “the good guys still win out, and they do it by being honest and playing the rules” (Gottschall, 2012: 134).

On the conclusion, the importance of story is overviewed in Gottschall’s interpretation of moralizing in stories:

In a series of papers and a forthcoming book, Joseph Carroll, John Johnson, Dan Kruger, and I propose that stories make societies work better by encouraging us to behave ethically. As with sacred myth, ordinary
stories—from TV shows to fairy tales—steep us all in the same powerful norms and values. The relentlessly stigmatize antisocial behavior and just as relentlessly celebrate prosocial behavior. We learn by association that if we are more protagonists, we will be more apt to reap the typical rewards of protagonists (for instance, love, social advancement, and other happy endings) and less likely to reap the rewards of antagonists (for instance, death and disastrous loss of social standing) (Gottschall, 2012: 134).

In short, fiction has positive effects on readers’ moral development and sense of empathy.

Another study by psychologist Markus Appel shows that: “people who mainly watched drama and comedy on TV—as opposed to heavy viewers of news programs and documentaries—had substantially stronger ‘just world’ beliefs” (Gottschall, 2012: 136). He concludes that fiction may be partly responsible for the overly optimistic sense that the world is, on the whole, a just place. And the fact that people take this lesson to heart may be an important part of what makes human societies work (Gottschall, 2012: 136). According to his study, it can be said that the spectator of fictions are mostly higher in morality than those who do not enjoy fiction.

The last function of fiction can be seen in the phenomena of people watching film in a movie theater. In the sea of faces watching the same films, the interesting facts that can be observed are the expression of the watcher.

They flinch together, gasp together, roar with laughter together, choke up together. A film takes a motley association of strangers and syncs them up. It choreographs how they feel and what they think, how fast their heart beat, how hard they breathe, and how much they perspire. A film melds minds. It imposes emotional and psychic unity. Until the lights come up and the credits roll, a film makes people one (Gottschall, 2012: 136).

Films are one of the newest technique of fiction, before them the watchers are the same as a readers drowning in their books on each of their own coaches.
Before the invention of writing, before books become cheap enough to buy, story was always an intensely communal activity. “For ten of thousands of years before the invention of writing, story happened only when a teller came together with listeners” (Gottschall, 2012: 136). For uncounted millennia, story was always exclusively oral. A teller or actor attracted an audience, synchronized them up mentally and emotionally, and exposed them all to the same message.

Though technology has changed the communal nature of story, it has not destroyed it. People may absorb most of their stories alone or with family and friends, but they are still engaged in a socially regulating activity.

I may be by myself watching Breaking Bad or 30 Rock, or reading The Da Vinci Code or The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo, but there are millions of other people sitting on millions of other couches being exposed to exactly the same stories and undergoing the same process of neural, emotional, and psychological attunement. We are still having a communal experience; it’s just spread out over space and time (Gottschall, 2012: 137).

Story continues to fulfill its ancient function of binding society by reinforcing a set of common values and strengthening the ties of common value. It enculturates the youth. It defines people. Story subtly and constantly encourages people to be decent instead of decadent. Story is the grease and glue of society: by encouraging people to behave well, story reduces social friction while uniting people around common values (Gottschall, 2012:138).

Story—sacred and profane—is perhaps the main cohering force in human life. A society is composed of fractious people with different personalities, goals, and agendas. What connect us beyond our kinship ties? Story. As John Gardner puts it, fiction “is essentially serious and beneficial, a game played against chaos and death, against entropy.” Story is the counterforce to social disorder, the tendency of things fall apart. Story is the center without which the rest cannot hold (Gottschall, 2012: 138).
In Edward’s case, he told his life stories as tales. He was a storyteller, though as we go see through the theories, his stories are not reliable in part of its truth. Because as David Carr, a columnist, had said, “People remember what they can live with more often than how they lived” (Gottschall, 2012: 158). And Edward was telling the story based on his memory. His story should be considered fiction rather than memoirs. Memoirist do not tell true stories; they tell “truthy” ones (Gottschall, 2012: 161). Like the way Will addressed his father, many people also huff about being tricked by certain memoir scandal, saying that the writer betrayed a sacred trust and brand the writer as a cheat, liar, and a scoundrel. However, there is the justification of how memoirists tell their stories. Before judging them of the way they tell their stories, they should look more closely at the way they tell their own.

We spend our lives crafting stories that make us the noble—if flawed—protagonists of first-person dramas. A life story is a “personal myth” about who we are deep down—where we come from, how we got this way, and what it all means. Our life stories are who we are. They are our identity. A life story is not, however, an objective account. A life story is a carefully shaped narrative that is replete with strategic forgetting and skillfully spun meanings (Gottschall, 2012: 161).

The need to see themselves as the striving heroes of their own epics warps their sense of self. Fiction protagonists tend to be young, attractive, smart, and brave. They usually live interesting lives that are marked by intense conflict and drama; while average Americans work cubicle jobs and only watch protagonists do interesting things on television. On some level, they want to be more like the heroes of fiction, and that means deluding themselves about who they are and how they got that way (Gottschall, 2012: 171). Edward was not an exception in this pattern. Finally, Gottschall said in his book *The Storytelling Animal*, that people
are the great masterworks of their own storytelling minds—figments of their own imaginations.

Until the day we die, we are living the story of our lives. And, like a novel in process, our life stories are always changing and evolving, being edited, rewritten, and embellished by an unreliable narrator. We are, in large part, our personal stories. And those stories are more truthy than true (Gotschall, 2012: 176).

4. Theory of Moral Values

Humans act in two ways, the ways that he/she thought is right or what he/she thought is good. Like what Ross said, a morally good action needs not to be the doing of a right act and the doing of a right act needs not to be a morally good action (1963: 157); it means that there are two ways of getting things done, the right way and the good way.

Some people fail to notice the distinction between ‘right’ and ‘morally good’. Most men usually mean that ‘right’ is something that is his duty and it does not need to be morally good.

I would further suggest that that additional clearness would be gained if we used ‘act’ of the thing done, the initiation of change, and ‘action’ of the doing of it, the initiating of change, from a certain motive. We should then talk of a right act but not of a right action, of a morally good action but not of a morally good act. And it may be added that the doing of a right act may be amorally bad action, and that the doing of a wrong act may be a morally good action; for ‘right’ and ‘wrong’ refer entirely to the thing done, ‘morally good’ and ‘morally bad’ entirely to the motive from which it is done (Ross, 1963: 7).

This theory is used to support the white-lying act of Edward telling the tall tales as his life stories. Will thought his father was doing a wrong act through his lies in his storytelling. He did not notice that what he thought as right is not
always good for everybody. For Edward, the not-right-tall-tales storytelling is the act that was good.

Morality is about living; whether we choose to continue living, or we choose to stop living is a moral issue (Hinman, 1998:2). Moral is a clue how to act in right or good. Hinman said that moral is a set of rules and the rules tend to show about what you ought to do or should do (1998:5).

In doing something, someone must have a reason. The way he or she acts is related with morality. In *The Elements of Moral Philosophy*, Rachels gives a briefs explanation on morality:

Morality is, at the very least, the effort to guide one’s conduct by reason – that is, to do what there are the best person for doing – while giving equal weight to the interests of each individual who will be affected by one’s conduct (Rachels, 1999: 19).

It means that morality gives us a depiction of what conscientious moral agent means. The conscientious moral agent is someone who sees everyone’s conduct equitably; who carefully sifts facts and examines their implications; who accept principles of conduct only after examining his or her reason even when it means that his or her convictions may have to be revised; and who, finally, is willing to act on the results of this deliberation (1999:19).

Hinman states in *Ethics, a Pluralistic Approach to Moral Theory*:

They help us to understand the ways in which people structure their lives, the way in which their diverse actions fit together into a coherent whole. These theories are primarily descriptive in characters, that is, they focus on describing how people actually act and thus on understanding the underlying coherence of their actions (Hinman, 1998: 25).

It means that moral theories help to understand how things actually work, in this case related to someone’s actions. The theories “can only provide
knowledge and insight that will be useful if we decide to live a moral life” (1998:28). It can be said that moral can help us to do the right things. It is clear that moral theories give knowledge on how to live a good life.

Moral values are understood to be those that make a person good purely and simply as a person (Fagothey, 1985: 75). On the other hand, the description of value can be found through Hammes description in his book *Human Destiny*, that is,

The noun “value” is derived from the Latin verb *valere*, “to be strong” or “to be worth.” Contemporary dictionaries define it as the quality or fact of being worthwhile, excellent, useful, or desirable. As a transitive verb, *to value* generally means “to rate highly, to hold in high esteem, to regard as important or significant” (Hammes, 1978:237)

In describing moral values, first, we have to understand the basic ground of value. “One theory of value holds that what makes an act morally good or evil is the value or disvalue of its actual consequences,” (Wellman, 1975: 134). This means that an act is considered good if it gives value to the consequences. On the contrary, if it gives disvalue or harmful effect to the consequences, it can be considered as an evil act. Those comparisons brings the conclusion that virtue consisting of doing good to people and vice in doing harmful acts would be the most obvious theory of moral value.

The virtuous act expresses a good moral character, and the wicked act expresses an evil character. The character of a person consists of his various traits of character. A trait of character is something characteristic of the person, a fairly stable disposition to behave in specific ways.

A person is not irritable just because he loses his temper once or a few times; but if he often loses his temper and regularly becomes angry, even at minor irritations, then he has the trait of irritability. Again, we do not
judge a person lazy for taking a nap on a hot day or doing very little during a two-week vacation. But a person who habitually naps, loafes, and relaxes, and very seldom works hard or long is judged lazy. Those traits that determine moral value are character traits (Wellman, 1975: 144-145)

After knowing that virtue is a good quality for someone to be successful human living, it must be good if everyone can have virtuous traits in their character. Though each virtue is valuable for a different reason, on the most general level, humans are both rational and social beings who both want and need the company of other people; and in this setting, such qualities as loyalty, fairness, and honesty (further explanation on virtues will be presented in the theory of virtue) are needed for interacting with all those other people successfully. Considering that the virtues are important because the virtuous person will fare better in life, it may not be exaggerating that everybody wishes they have such quality.

For that, moral educations are important. For philosophers like Aquinas and Hsun Tzu, people are basically depraved, and a vigorous program of moral education is needed to correct this natural tendency (Boss, 2001: 428). On the other hand, Lao Tzu of Taoism, Confucian philosopher Mencius, and Chinese philosopher Wang Yang Ming believe that people are basically good. While Lao Tzu believed that cultivating virtues means letting go of our self naturally, Mencius believed that virtue is intimately tied in with sincerity and being true to oneself. Thus, the process of becoming a virtuous person depends on “setting the mind in the right” (Boss, 2001: 429).

A more active approach is served by Wang Yang Ming, who believed that the teacher should be “indefatigable and energetic in his effort to guard this
knowledge of the good.” Moral education also involves learning and practice (Boss, 2001: 429). Moreover, like Wang Yang Ming, Aristotle emphasized the importance of practice in the development of virtue. However, although he believed that humans are naturally inclined to be virtuous, he also believed that moral virtues are the outcome of habit, that the cultivation of virtues requires willpower and practice as well.

According to Aristotle, it is generally easier for people to be virtuous if their early childhood education reinforced virtuous behavior; however, it is never too late to habituate ourselves to be virtuous people by constant practice of moral actions (Boss, 2001: 430). The above quotation indicates the importance of moral education since the young age. Because it is easier for people to be virtuous if they are raised with virtuous behavior as their moral value. Because the formation of good habits is so important, moral education should start at an early age. In their study of people who rescued Jews from the Nazis during World War II, Pearl and Samuel Oliner found that virtue education during childhood had a significant effect on the rescuers’ later behavior.

The rescuers’ commitment to “actively protect or enhance the well-being of others,” they noted, “did not emerge suddenly under the threat of Nazi brutality.” The development of a virtuous character as well as a sense of universal moral duty had been instilled in them since childhood: Seventy percent of rescuers in the Oliners’ study, as compared to 56 percent of nonrescuers, stated that their parents emphasized the development of virtues such as honesty, respect, compassion, generosity, helpfulness, expansiveness, and hospitality. Rescuers were also more than twice as likely as nonrescuers to state that their parents taught them that moral values applied universally to all humans (Boss, 2001: 430).

Like Aristotle philosophers, Buddhists also emphasize the importance of cultivating virtue. “However according to Buddhists, moral education involves changing our way of thinking more than practicing virtuous acts” (Boss, 2001:}
431). To be virtuous is not an easy thing. It needs to be cultivated in one self as early as possible so it can become a habitual thing for them. Parents take a great part in guiding their child in the process of imposing morality upon them.

5. Theory of Virtue

The *International Encyclopedia of Ethics* defines virtue as “the principles of goodness and rightness in character and conduct that lead a person toward moral excellence and away from moral depravity” (Roth, 1995: 912). In other words, virtue is the thinking that drives someone to act good and right that will lead him/her to achieve a good moral quality. That thinking is the trait of a character that grows from his/her own inner nature, not something that comes from command or any external influences. An intrinsically good characteristic can be possessed through one’s personal experience and habit. As what Rachel stated in *The Elements of Moral Philosophy*,

We seek out people for different purposes, and this makes a difference to the virtues that are relevant. In looking for an auto mechanic, we want someone who is skillful, honest, and conscientious; in looking for a teacher, we want someone who is knowledgeable, articulate, and patient. Thus the virtues associated with teaching. But we also assess people as people, in a more general way, so we have the concept, not just of a good mechanic or a good teacher, but of a good person. The moral virtues are the virtues of persons as such. Taking our cue from Pincoffs, then, we may define a virtue as a *trait of character, manifested in habitual action, that it is good for a person to have*. And the moral virtues are the virtues that it is good for everyone to have. (Rachel, 1999: 178)

Not only as a characteristic, virtue also defined as an “overarching quality of goodness or excellence that gives unity and integrity to a person’s character” (Boss, 2000: 402).

Virtues are important; they are needed to conduct our lives well. “Despite their differences, the virtues all have the same general sort of value: They are all
qualities needed for successful human living” (Rachel, 1999: 185). They are also essential to inner harmony and contentment. The good that humans seek is achieved through virtuous act. As Boss said,

Most virtue ethicists believe that virtue is important for achieving not only moral well-being but also happiness and inner harmony. Aristotle referred to this sense of psychological well-being as eudaemonia.

... It is a condition of the soul or psyche; it is the good that human seek by nature and that arises from the fulfillment of our function as humans. (Boss, 2000: 404)

Virtues also have a close connection with human’s happiness. A virtuous life may lead to a happy life. In a review of studies throughout the world on factors that contribute to happiness, Runt Veenhoven found that,

Happiness level are highest among people who value inner peace, love, sympathy, friendship, forgiveness, tolerance, and group participation – all traits that most philosophers consider virtues. (Boss, 2000: 404)

A virtuous man is a man that has virtues as his dominant characteristics. Virtues are their principles, quality, and nature. Virtuous people have a well-developed moral character. “Virtue is integral to their self-concept. They place moral motives above other considerations” (Boss, 2000: 427). They are the type that will save someone’s live without any second thought. Virtuous people do not do something based on anything like fear of punishment, other’s prejudice, obligation, or as pay back for the other party that needed their aid.

Virtuous people do not just happen to act in a way that is good, that happens to be virtuous. They act virtuously because it is already a part of who they are. According to psychologist Anne Colby and William Damon,

People with a high level of moral commitment carry out their commitments in a spontaneous manner by force of habit. virtuous people
enjoy being virtuous; they do not need to struggle to overcome temptation or make sacrifices to be virtuous. (Boss, 2000: 427)

These people usually have strong minds. They have proper self-esteem, also the strength to their own convictions. “People who are morally virtuous are not likely as people with weak characters to mindlessly follow authority or to do things under social pressure that they would not otherwise do on their own” (Boss, 2000: 427). Boss also said that,

Rather than keeping their innermost self-intact by use of immature defense mechanism and resistance, virtuous people organize their innermost self based on integrity. People of integrity, such as Elizabeth Cady Stanton and other moral reformers, have the strength of character to stand by their principles even if they are unpopular (Boss, 2000: 427).

“The only thing that determines whether a person lives well or badly is whether he lives virtuously or not” (Wellman, 1975: 89). Virtue is what makes someone’s life to be considered a good one. For one to have this morally good characteristic is not an easy process.

The cultivation of virtue and the good will is a lifelong process. Very few people ever attain a level of moral development where they no longer struggle against temptation. According to Aristotle, for those who constantly strive to be virtuous, being virtuous person gradually becomes much easier and more pleasurable (Boss, 2000:247).

It is not an easy task to decide what character trait are the virtues. In deciding, problems will always arise. One of them is that some traits are always standing between two vices of its own excess and deficiency. Some traits are only virtue when it constantly mean in the midpoint. Courage, for example is the mean between cowardice and foolhardiness. Moreover, it applied differently for all people; for an agoraphobic, going outside already shows courage and for social people it is not a courageous act. However, according to Aristotle, people should not look for the middle ground between leading a moral versus and immoral life.
“On the contrary, he said that people should find virtue and live it to the fullest” (Roth, 1995: 913), in this example of case, “the soldier should not settle for middle ground between rashness and cowardice, but instead should serve as courageously as possible” (Roth, 1995: 913).

There are no exact measures for a trait to be considered virtue. There are however some aspects that can be used as a separator. According to Boss, one of the separators is the will,

Not all beneficial traits are moral virtues. Traits such as health and intelligence are beneficial, but they are not necessarily what we consider moral virtues. What distinguishes moral virtues from other beneficial characteristics, according to most philosophers, is the will—the faculty that allows us to make rational choices. We do not decide to be intelligent or healthy, in the same sense that we choose to be courageous or generous. “If the will be set in virtue,” Confucius taught, “there will be no practice of wickedness” (Boss, 2001: 402).

Many characteristics can be considered virtuous traits. There are elaborated lists of virtuous principles in different cultures, each complemented with criteria for judging moral goodness. Confucian Virtue, from Confucius, an influential person in Chinese ethics that brought us the consideration of virtue as a mean between the extreme of excess and deficiency, has five primary virtues: charity, righteousness, propriety, wisdom, and sincerity.

Buddhistic Virtue, taught by Siddharta Gautama from India who was given the title of Buddha—one who embodies the divine characteristics of virtue and wisdom, carries virtues as patience, self-restraint, contentment, sympathy, and mildness for a person to be called Brahmin—a Hindu of the priestly class—teaches six paramitas—perfections of character, a list of virtues for the followers of Buddha to be exercised perfectly: love, morality, patience, courage, meditation,
and knowledge (Roth, 1995: 912-913). Teutonic Virtues, virtues of Teutonic peoples—inhbitants of northern Europe, had eight virtues that relevant to nobility of character; endurance (of purpose), loyalty, generosity, hospitality, truthfulness, modesty, marital purity (abstinence from adultery), and courage (Roth, 1995: 913).

According to Roth, in classical Greek philosophy, there are Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle as its great philosopher that devoted much attention to the subject of virtue. In the *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle distinguished between theoretical and practical virtues. The three theoretical virtues are: wisdom, science, and understanding. The two practical virtues are; art (the ability to know how to produce or create things) and prudence (the ability to know how to act well in life’s affair) (Roth, 1995: 913). He also divided the virtues into two broad categories: intellectual virtues and moral virtues. The intellectual virtues, that are based on excellence in reasoning skill and include wisdom and prudence, are cultivated through growth and experience. The moral virtues, that are cultivated through habit, include courage, temperance, liberality, generosity, magnificence, proper pride, gentleness, truthfulness, justice, patience, friendliness, modesty, and wittiness (Boss, 2001: 402).

Taught by Socrates and identified as cardinal virtues by Plato, the four main qualities of wisdom, courage, temperance, and justice are essential to the Christian moral character. It is Saint Augustine that Christianized the cardinal virtues and placed it alongside the theological virtues; faith, hope, and love, making them the seven virtues the qualities for proper Christian behavior (Roth,
1995: 913-914). From the *International Encyclopedia of Ethics*, The Seven Virtues can be described as the following:

a. Prudence

Prudence means exercising common sense and sound judgment in practical matters, carefully considering the consequences of one’s action. The prudent person can speak the “fitting” word at the proper time, knows when and how to promote the interests of both self and others, and knows how to arrange his or her affairs for the greatest benefit (Roth, 1995: 914).

b. Temperance

Temperance refers to moderation and self-restraint in the pursuit and expression of all pleasures. A person lacking in temperance would be given to gluttony, promiscuity, and arrogance. Conversely, too much restraint would leave a person with austere eating habits, excessive prudishness in sexual behavior, and a self-deprecating personality (Roth, 1995: 914).

c. Justice

Justice demands that affairs among people be guided by fairness, impartiality, and equality. The just person is honest, truthful, stands for what is right, and keeps his or her word (Roth, 1995: 914).

d. Courage

Courage is the ability to face danger and distress with endurance and purpose of heart. Bravery, determination, sturdiness, and tenacity are the characteristics of those who are courageous. Courageous people are not those who lack fear. Courageous people act in spite of fear, work to overcome their fears, and triumph in the face of fear (Roth, 1995: 914).
e. Faith

Faith, according to the New Testament writer Paul (Heb.11:1), is “the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.” The faithful person demonstrates the traits of loyalty, steadfastness, dependability, and trustworthiness (Roth, 1995: 914).

f. Hope

Hope is the expectation that one’s desires will be realized. Hope is forward-looking, giving direction, purpose, and energy to life. The person who hopes is stimulated to greater personal growth, works toward a better society, and believes in something better to come (Roth, 1995: 914).

g. Love

Love is a transcending devotion to another. Love is affective; it involves feelings of closeness, tenderness, and passion. Love is behavioral; it has to do with how one person acts and intends to act toward another. Love is cognitive; it involves knowing another, wishing for and thinking of another’s best. The loving person cares for others, is benevolent, and stands against hatred and malice wherever it appears. In I Corinthians 13:13, love is considered to be preeminent over faith and hope. Indeed, many have called love the greatest of the seven virtues. (Roth, 1995: 914)

Still, to be called a virtuous person, there are no exact ways to describe a person to fit certain given lists above. In determining one is virtuous, it is important to look beyond his/her words and opinion, to look his/her action and how he/she treats others. The best way is to collect the dominant characteristics of the person and decide whether the traits he/she is having are virtuous or not. In
dealing with this kind of problem, it is better to look into what Nathan R. Kollar said,

Some virtues are part of any listing of virtues; justice, prudence, generosity, courage, temperance, magnanimity, gentleness, magnificence, wisdom. Yet there is no agreed upon list of virtues some authors point out that there may be conflicts between some virtues—gentleness and justice, for example, that cannot be resolved. These authors suggest that the only way to resolve such conflicts is to give primacy to “rule and consequence ethics” rather than virtue ethics. Yet the challenge of human living is to deal with conflict in a constructive way, and virtue ethics holds that dealing with such conflicts will lead to growth in a person’s ethical character. (Roth, 1995:915).

The opposite quality of virtue is vice. According to International Encyclopedia of Ethics, vice is evil or wicked behavior and character (Roth, 1995: 912). The tall tales that Edward offered to his listeners are full of virtues, there are barely no vice found in the story of his life.

C. Theoretical Framework

The theories are used as guidance in answering the question given in the problem formulation. The theories of character and theories of characterization are used to answer the first question, to examine the characteristics of Edward Bloom, the main character of the story. The other three theories of story, moral values, and virtue are used in answering the second question. The theory of story is used in finding out the significance of the tales as well as examining Edward’s motivation in telling the stories. The theory of moral is used to get the moral value of the tall tales told by the main characters that is seen through the character’s characterization in the story. Theory of virtue is used to define what virtuous characteristic are presented through the characterization of Edward and which are revealed through the moral values of the story.
CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

A. Object of the Study

The object of this study is *Big Fish* movie script written by John August, an American screenwriter and film director. The script had been filmed with Tim Burton as the director, starring Ewan McGregor, Albert Finney, Billy Crudup, Jessica Lange, and Marion Cotillard. The movie received the most nominations at the 61st Golden Globe Award without a single win. It also got seven nominations at the 57th British Academy Film Awards and two nominations in Saturn Award.

*Big Fish* movie script, written by John August in 2003, is based on the book *Big Fish: A Novel of Mythic Proportions* by Daniel Wallace. The movie script was published by Columbia Pictures.

The script mainly struggles with the relationship between father and son. Edward Bloom is the father and a storyteller while Will Bloom is the son and the listener. The main issue is that the stories Edward told was considered fake and lying by Will. The issue was affecting their relationship a lot, because both are not willing to yield at each other’s conviction.

The script begins to develop its story when Will, who had not spoken to Edward for three years, is informed that Edward’s health condition is worsening. Immediately, he and his pregnant wife go back to his home in Alabama. The plot is evolving around Will’s memory of his father’s tale that he had heard thousands
time since he is a young boy. Will was struggling to know the real version of the story, the real story of Edward, while Edward was still around. In the process of recalling back the tales, Will found many evidence supporting the truth of the tales instead of evidence to his accusation that they are all just a lie his father made. In the end, he finally understand his father’s thirst in telling stories.

For additional information, the struggle in dealing and understanding with one’s father are also experienced by the screenwriter John August and director Tim Burton. In the process of making the script and movie, both are dealing with the loss of father while struggling to know their father better, just like Will.

B. Approach of the Study

The focus of this study is to analyze the moral values in Edward’s stories through Edward’s characterization. The approach used for the analysis is moral philosophical approach. This approach focuses on reason behind one’s act.

The researcher uses Wilfred L. Guerin’s theory in moral philosophical approach. In his book, *A Handbook of Critical Approaches to Literature*, Samuel Johnson, a commentator of the age of neoclassicism in English literature, stated that the basic position of such critics is that the larger function of literature is to teach morality and to probe philosophical issues (Guerin, 2011: 60). Matthew Arnold, the Victorian critic also said that

In each instance critics working from a moral bent are not unaware of form, figurative language, and other purely aesthetic considerations, but they consider them to be secondary. The important thing is the moral or philosophical teaching. On its highest plane this is not superficially didactic, though it may at first seem so. In the larger sense, all great literature teaches. The critic who employs the moral-philosophical
approach insists on ascertaining and stating what is taught. If the work is in any degree significant or intelligible, this meaning will be there (Guerin, 2011: 61).

This approach, the moral philosophical approach, is chosen based on the main concern of the story this study is using, about the struggles of a man in understanding the meaning of all the tall tales (that can be described as exaggerated stories, in other words stories that never really happened or are verified to be real) his father told over and over again to whoever willing to listen. The struggle is emerged from his inability to understand his father as a person. The anger that he displays are the result of the frustration of failing to grasp the point his father teaches through his tall tales.

C. Method of the Study

The method of this study for collecting the data was library research. The data used in the analysis were collected from the book of movies, moral philosophy, fiction, literature, dictionaries, and internet.

There were two parts of sources used for supporting the analysis. The primary source was the work of literature itself, Big Fish movie script written by John August. The secondary source was the theories used for analyzing the topic taken from books, thesis, articles, and internet.

The researcher took several steps in analyzing this study. First the writer watched the Big Fish movie directed by Tim Burton. Then, the researcher tried to understand the movie further by reading the movie script and decided the topic for this study. The second step was setting up the problem formulations and began the library research, to find some references in reviews and theories to support the
topic. The references were taken from any related books, previous theses, internet articles, and the movie itself. The third step was answering the problem formulations using the theories described in the second chapter. This step was done by analyzing the character and characterization of Edward Bloom in the movie script. The analyzing of the character was achieved by M. H. Abrams and Christopher Russel Reaske’s theories about characters and characterization. Then, the researcher analyzed the values of the tall tales that revealed in the characterization of Edward Bloom in the movie script. This step was achieved by applying the theory of story and theory of moral, especially in the theory of virtue. The final step was finding out the messages and moral values of the tall stories that revealed from the characterization of Edward. This step was achieved by using the theory of moral applied in the second problem formulations. Finally, the researcher drew the conclusion of the analysis of the study by applying and relating all the collected data.
CHAPTER IV

ANALYSIS

In this chapter, the researcher is trying to present the characters and the characterization of the major character and moral values of the tall tales. The analyses are presented in two parts, the explanation of the characterization and the moral values depicted in the story.

A. The Characterization of Edward Bloom

The main focus of this study is the main character, Edward Bloom, the major character of the movie. Edward is the man whose life is what the stories are based on. He is the storyteller and at the same time, the hero of the story. The movie is about Edward, his son Will, and Edward’s tale. The main concern of the movie is the regards of Edward’s Tale.

The main issue in this movie is the father and son relationship distressed by the tales brought up by Edward from time to time. His son Will considered the excessive amount of fabrication he put in his tales as lies. Will had heard the tales since he was a small boy and after hundred times of hearing the same tales from his father, he started to doubt the truth of them. He thought that his father’s life story was as fake as fairy tales were.

The tales in the movies were about Edward’s life. The tales were told from various storytellers, mostly from Will’s memory of his father’s story. Will did not trust his father’s story but he had no other choice but to tell the stories as his father told him.
WILL (V.O.). In telling the story of my father’s life, it’s impossible to separate the fact from the fiction, the man from the myth. The best I can do is to tell it the way he told me (August, 2003: 7).

Will was not a sentimental person or a natural storyteller like his father. He told the tales under a special condition; his father’s health condition was worsening and he had the urge to know more about his father’s life, the true version of the tales he had heard. He returned to his home with that intention.

The movie’s plot is moving back and forth from the concrete present time setting where Will was a married grown up and Edward was dying, to the past stories of Edward’s episodic biography brought up by turns as an epic story by Will’s memory and Edward.

In the beginning of the movie, Edward appeared as a conservative old man in Will’s wedding party, telling stories to the guest. He was a natural storyteller. He told his stories in many occasions and at the wedding party, he unintentionally became the center of attention. When there was just the two of them, Will finally spoke up to Edward that he was not pleased with all his stories. That was the last time they spoke to each other until Will heard the news that his father was dying, three years later.

The characterizations that the researcher uses are from the characteristics of Edward as seen in the tall tales. Edward was a hero of his own tales, stories about his past life, the journey he took until the day he settled down with his wife and his only son.
The characterizations of Edward’s characteristics are observed by studying the stories one by one. From the stories, the researcher collects the characteristics that appeared as the dominant trait in those stories. The researcher enlists the stories into 10 parts and from each part, the characteristics are explained.

1. The Witch

The first story was told through Will’s memory of his father. In other words, it is described from Will’s point of view. He recalled the story from the moment he flew back to his home in Alabama after his mother told him that Edward’s health condition were worsening. He saw a boy playing shadow with his hand, reminded him of his childhood time where his father playing shadows while telling him a bedtime story about the witch.

There was an Old Woman whom people in the town of Ashton believed to be a witch, the most feared witch in Alabama. She lived near the swamp outside the town and was believed to possess a glass eye, which was said to contain mystical power.

In a quest of finding out the truth of the glass eye, there were Edward and his four friends. One of his friend confronted Edward to go inside and get them the glass eye. Edward accepted the challenge and went inside. He met the Old Woman and asked her to show her glass eye to his friends. The Old Woman showed them what was inside her mysterious glass eye. It turned out that the glass eye was able to show whoever looked into it how he/she would die. His curiosity made him asked to look into her glass eye, in order to help himself out in the future, so that he knew that everything else he could survive.
In this story, it can be seen that Edward is a socially charming person. He successfully convinced the Old Woman into cooperating with him and she followed him to his friends. The most feared Witch in Alabama was willing to grant Edward’s request without any hesitation. All he ever did was stating his intention clearly and straightforwardly to her.

His sincere act also helped him a lot in dealing with the Old Woman. He never let his fear prevent him from being polite. While most people would instinctively run or hide the moment they saw her, Edward talked to the Old Woman in a polite manner. Edward treated her in a way he would treat a common old woman; he spoke politely and walked her to her house, because not only did he did want to offend her in any ways, he also did not find any reason why he would have to do it in any other way. In fact, his sincerity helped him gaining the Old Woman’s trust.

While they were approaching the house, Edward occasionally reminded his friends, he questioned almost everything; whether she had the glass eye or not and also he doubted the fact that whoever looked at it would know how they would die. He was doubtful but curious about the Witch. Those are the signs that since young age he had already used his mind in sensible manners.

EDWARD. Zacky, turn your flashlight on!
ZACKY. I don’t got any batteries!

...  
EDWARD. Is it true she got a glass eye?
WILBUR FREELY. I heard she got it from Gypsies.
EDWARD. What’s a Gypsy?

...  
WILBUR FREELY. I hear if you look right at it, you can see how you’re gonna die.
EDWARD. That’s bull-s-h-i-t, that is. She’s not even a real witch (August, 2003: 11-13).

In every action Edward took, he was seen to be a smart kid. After his friends fled, Edward purposefully asked and looked at the Old Woman’s glass eye to know how he would die. He was curious about what could possibly happen to him in the future and how it would help him achieve his goals.

EXT. AT THE OLD WOMAN’S DOOR – NIGHT
Edward helps her back inside. He could leave now, but curiosity gets the better of him.
EDWARD. I was thinking about death and all. About seeing how you’re gonna die.
The Old Woman turns to him slightly, still not facing him.
EDWARD (CONT’D). I mean, on one hand, if dying was all you thought about, it could kind of screw you up. But it could kind of help you, couldn’t it? Because you’d know that everything else you can survive.
The Old Woman smiles a little, a crooked grin of broken teeth.
EDWARD (CONT’D). I guess I’m saying, I’d like to know.
The Old Woman turns leaning her face right in front of his. And on a silent count of one, two, three – Edward looks into The Eye.
This time we don’t cut. Instead, we HOLD ON Edward as he witnesses his death. He stares transfixed, perplexed and amused. Whatever he sees, it’s not as dire as the other boys. His future has something strange in store.
EDWARD (CONT’D). Huh. That’s how I go?
The Old Woman nods. Still a little overwhelmed, Edward turns and leaves.
ADULT EDWARD (V.O.). From that moment on, I no longer feared death. And for that, I was as good as immortal (August, 2003: 16).

The quotation above shows that he accepted the reality differently. He thought out of the box, unlike his friends. While everybody else would fear such knowledge, Edward indeed made use of it and turned it into his strength. He reversed what seemed to be an obstacle to be a support for his journey in the future.

Edward’s act of asking to see his future is not only a proof that he was smart, but also courageous. His courage in the story began with the challenge that Don Price put upon him when he doubted the Witch. Edward did not believe that
the old woman was a witch. His doubt and disbelief triggered him to directly accept the challenge from Don Price to get the eye. He wanted to see it himself if the Old Woman was really a Witch, like what everybody believed. Edward also challenged himself to satisfy his curiosity by intentionally asking to see his future with his own eye.

ADULT EDWARD (V.O.) (CONT’D). Yet of all the witches in Alabama, there was one who was the most feared. For she had one glass eye, which was said to contain mystical powers.

*We finally come to the kids, staring in through the gate.*

WILBUR FREELY. I hear if you look right at it, you can see how you’re gonna die.

EDWARD. That’s bull-s-h-i-t, that is. She’s not even a real witch.

DON PRICE. You’re so sure, why don’t you go in and get that eye? I heard she keeps it in a box on her night table.

*Edward looks back at the spooky house.*

DON PRICE (CONT’D) Or are you too scared?

EDWARD. I’ll go in right now and get that eye.

DON PRICE. Then do it.

EDWARD. Fine, I will.

DON PRICE. Fine, you do it.

EDWARD. Fine, I’m doing it.

*He hands Zacky his flashlight, then starts climbing the gate* (August, 2003: 13).

This story is the key for the most of unreasonable acts on his future journey. In his young age, he already had been a **socially charming, sincere, smart,** and **courageous** kid. However, his encounter with the Old Woman initiated his unreasonable acts that cannot be done only with mere courage. For example, in the next story, he once carried a dog out of a burning house; he was able to do that because knew the fire would not kill him (August, 2003: 26).
2. The Biggest Thing in Ashton

This story is also recited by Will. After talking to his father, Will walked past his old bedroom and he recalled a story of when he had chicken pox and his father consoled him with a story of his own childhood.

When he was about 10 years old, Edward once had to spend three years confined in his bed due to his unusual growth. No one knew what was wrong. He had to lie down and had his limbs connected to various pulleys and levers to support his weight (August, 2003: 25). While lying down, he kept a dozen encyclopedias around him and from them he learned that like a goldfish in a bowl, his unusual growth might have been because he was intended for larger things.

*INSERT: The encyclopedia article, complete with drawings.*

*YOUNG EDWARD. (reading) "Kept in a small bowl, the goldfish will remain small. With more space, the fish can grow double, triple, or quadruple its size."

*Young Edward thinks this through.*

*EDWARD (V.O.). It occurred to me then, that perhaps the reason for my growth was that I was intended for larger things. After all, a giant man can’t have an ordinary-sized life (August, 2003: 25).*

After that, Edward underwent a great change in his way of life. In the small town of Ashton, he topped many aspects a boy could possibly achieve; a sport star, a football hero, a basketball MVP, a teenage employer (of a lawnmower company “Bloom Landscaping”), a local hero. He saved a dog from a burning house, was a blue ribbon winner in scientific invention contest, the lead cast and a star of a show. As such, he became the biggest thing the town of Ashton had ever seen.

*EDWARD (V.O.). As soon as my bones had settled in their adult configuration, I set upon my plan to make a bigger place for myself in Ashton (August, 2003: 26).*
Being determined is the most visible trait of Edward within this particular story. His tremendous feats throughout his younger years show that Edward was a man that was determined to fulfill his ambition. He did not want to settle for anything less than the best of Ashton because he knew that he had to push his limits in his hometown first for him to seek something bigger outside. His accomplishment was gained from his distinct personality; he was curious, courageous, optimistic and stubborn. From the article about a goldfish in a bowl, he learned that he was meant to be a greater thing than just an Ashton’s favorite. He pushed his limit to be the best son of Ashton.

While he was unable to go anywhere for three years, he kept encyclopedias around him, reading all the content to keep up with the other kid that had the chance to explore everything through direct learning. When he read the article about the goldfish, he related it to his condition and found the reason for his unusual growth. It marks the fact that even when he had to lie down in his bed for three years, it did not stop him from learning everything he had ever wanted. He kept his mind working with all the encyclopedias and his understanding in reading the goldfish articles showed that he did not only read them but also understand the contents. It provides evidence that Edward is a smart boy.

This story also supports the preceding story where Edward appeared to be a socially charming teenager. Whatever he was doing in his days in Ashton, people cheered for him. Girls loved him. He even had fan club scout. Everybody
loved him, except Don Price. Don was not happy and he was jealous with Edward’s accomplishment.

Edward’s most visible characteristics in this story are **determined, smart,** and **socially charming.** He had made the best of him with those traits, at least for a small town like Ashton.

3. Karl The Giant

Edward was the biggest thing Ashton had ever seen, until one day, a giant was causing a disturbance in the small town. The giant ate Ashton’s livestock and spread horror to the entire town. After days of horror brought by the appearance of the giant, a mob of about 50 gathered, protested the mayor for doing nothing in defense. The mayor, did not want to have riot in the town, suggested someone to talk to the giant. Edward volunteered himself to talk to the giant to see if he could get him to move from the town.

Edward went to see the giant. He called him out but the giant did not seem to be interested in talking to him and asked him to leave. Edward refused to leave until he showed himself, and the giant finally went out exposing himself to Edward. Edward told him that he was there so he could eat him as the town’s human sacrifice, and he wished that he could get it over quickly because he could not stand the pain. The giant refused his offer, stated that he did not want to eat anybody; the problem was just he was too big he got so hungry.

Edward convinced him that it was not that he was too big, but the town was too small for him. He told the giant about big cities where everything was so big and how they served all-you-can-eat-buffet and that he should be there instead
of that small town. When the giant doubted him, Edward introduced himself and
told him about his ambition, about how he felt that he could not grow any bigger
if he stayed there, and how he had wished to leave the town together with him.
Karl the giant agreed to leave the town with Edward.

When they were about to depart from Ashton the whole town saw them
off. They held special gathering to honor him, to honor the last merit he had done
for the town. Everybody wanted to give him advice, even the Old Woman were
there to give him her advice. That day, Edward’s journey finally began.

Once again, Edward was proven a courageous person. In this story, he
volunteered himself to talk to the giant and he braced himself to try to confront
the giant even when he had already seen how big the giant was. He offered
himself as a human sacrifice, gambling of how the giant would react to that. He
already saw his death in the glass eye so he knew the giant could not possibly kill
him, but still he preferred to keep his bones unbroken (August, 2003: 29).

Edward had always tried to be polite to everybody without exception. He
treated people equally nice, even if she/he happened to be a witch or a giant. Like
his encounter with the Old Woman, he did not treat Karl as he would treat
anybody that was different, even if he knew Karl was probably inhumane, wild
and capable of harming him. He talked to the giant in a non-threatening manner;
the way he talked to common people. He even asked for his name first before
introducing himself and that made the giant feel more appreciated, comfortable in
talking and agreed to do what he said. He helped Karl solve his problem even
though he barely knew Karl. This showed that Edward was a sincere person; he helped people without any hesitation.

Both the Old Woman and Karl got comfortable with Edward and were willing to listen what he had got to say. In this particular story, he gained Karl’s trust and they traveled together.

When Edward was convincing Karl to come with him, he also appeared to be both smart and socially charming. Edward was smart for tricking Karl so he refused to harm him by openly confronting Karl to eat him first. He gambled with the offer but successfully went out from the situation without getting any harm on both sides.

He was socially charming for successfully convincing Karl with only his words and story. He used no force and he used the manner of talking that got Karl comfortable with him and believed what he said. Nobody was harmed and he even gained an ally for his journey.

KARL. I don’t want to eat you. I don’t want to eat anybody. It’s just I get so hungry. I’m too big.

*And that’s the sad truth. Karl is less a monster than a freak – a giant man, but in the end, just a man.*

Edward takes a seat beside him.

EDWARD. Did you ever think maybe you’re not too big? Maybe this town’s just too small. I mean, look at it.

*Circling behind them, we look down at Ashton – a tiny town in a tiny valley.*

EDWARD (CONT’D). Hardly two stories in the whole place. Now I’ve heard in real cities, they’ve got buildings so tall you can’t even see the tops of ‘em.

KARL. Really?

EDWARD. Wouldn’t lie to you. And they’ve got all-you-can-eat buffets. You can eat a lot, can’t you?

KARL. I can.

EDWARD. So why are you wasting your time in a small town? You’re a big man. You should be in the big city.
Karl smiles, but then it fades. A certain sad suspicion –
KARL. You’re just trying to get me to leave, aren’t you? That’s why they
sent you here.
EDWARD. What’s your name, Giant?
KARL. Karl.
EDWARD. Mine’s Edward. And truthfully, I do want you to leave, Karl.
But I want to leave with you.

Closer
You think this town too small for you, well, it’s too small for a man of my
ambition. I can’t see staying here a day longer.
KARL. You don’t like it?
EDWARD. I love every square inch of it. But I can feel the edge closing
in on me. A man’s life can only grow to a certain size in a place like this.

Beat
So what do you say? Join me? (August, 2003: 31)

The proof of Edward’s determined characteristic can also be found here.

Edward stated his ambition in talking to Karl. He was willing to leave the town
and he thought that the town was too small for a man of his ambition. His
ambition would also appeared in his determination in conquering a haunted road
in the next story.

Edward appeared to be a socially charming person in not only dealing with
the giant, but also in his day of departure. The whole town knew him and they
held special gathering to honor him, give him their advice and to see him off.

EXT. MAIN STREET OF ASHTON – DAY
Spirits buoyed by the high school MARCHING BAND, all the good
CITIZENS of Ashton are gathered to see off Edward and Karl. There’s a
few tears amid the familiar faces.
MAYOR. Loudly, for the crowd. Edward Bloom, first son of Ashton, it’s
with a heavy heart we see you go. But take with you this Key to the City,
and know that any time you want to come back, all our doors are open to
you.
Edward ducks a bit so the Mayor can put the key around his neck. The
crowd CHEERS. And with that, Edward and Karl start walking, waving as
they go

... 
Many of the townsfolk come onto the street to hug Edward or shake his
hand.
EDWARD (V.O.). That afternoon as I left Ashton, everyone seemed to have advice (August, 2003: 32).

Even the Old Woman went to town to see him off and gave him her advice. He listened to her advice, even though he did not understand what she was actually saying. He got the Key to the City, the highest honor a civilian can get nonmilitary. It means that the whole town would always be open for him whenever he wanted to come back.

The dominant characteristics that can be gathered from this story are **courageous, sincere, smart,** and **socially charming.** Though it can be said that Edward was also determined in describing his plan in leaving the town, but that was not what this particular story was all about.

4. Spectre

After he left Ashton along with Karl, they came across a road which branched into two paths. Both are the roads out of Ashton, but people did not use the old road anymore, and it had developed the reputation of being haunted. (p33). Edward took the old road and Karl took the other. They agreed to meet on the far side.

The older road was not an easy route. Edward met many obstacles in his way through it. He ran into a small town named Spectre where the people were friendly; they welcomed him over-excitedly and offered him to stay there forever. Edward politely refused and carried on his journey after staying there for a while. As difficult as the beginning, he survived the road again and met Karl on the end of the road.
Edward’s determined trait had always been fueled by his curiosity, stubbornness and optimism, allowing him to go further ahead than the other. His curiosity had led him to a journey through the old road out of Ashton, and when he faced too many obstacles, he stubbornly went on with his convictions. In this story, obviously his ambition was to conquer the old road.

**EXT. THE DARK FOREST – DAY [LATER]**
*Edward is bruised, battered and bee-stung.*
*A half-broken sign lies in the road. Edward picks it up. Reads it: WARNING! JUMPING SPIDER!*
*Sure enough, up ahead he sees the path is overgrown with thick cobwebs, heavy from the rain.*

**EDWARD (V.O.).** There comes a point where a reasonable man will swallow his pride and admit he’s made a terrible mistake. The truth is, I was never a reasonable man.

**Edward tosses the sign and forges ahead, into the spiderwebs.**
**EDWARD (CONT’D).** And what I recalled of Sunday School was that the more difficult something became, the more rewarding it was in the end (August, 2003: 35).

Edward is not the man that gets scared easily just because something is scary, murderou,s or even haunted. He had to at least experience it first to get scared or worried. Like when he chose to see the witch out of his curiosity, Edward chose the old road, because he did not intend to ever come back to Ashton. The road was rumored to be haunted but Edward still chose to use it. His decision in this story shows his courageous trait.

**EDWARD (V.O.).** There were two roads out of Ashton, a new one which was paved, and an older one that wasn’t. People didn’t use the old road anymore, and it had developed the reputation of being haunted.

**Edward and Karl come to abend, where the paved road veers left and an overgrown dirt road runs straight. The old road is blocked with signs and warnings of danger.**

**EDWARD (V.O.) (CONT’D).** Since I had no intention of ever returning to Ashton, this seemed as good a time as any to find out what lay down that old road (August, 2003: 33).
He never hesitated to help people in need. His fear and common sense often comes second whenever he saw something urgent. When he was staying in Spectre, alone by the river, he saw a naked woman swimming. While he was being stunned by the vision, he saw a snake swimming quietly approaching her. Instinctively, Edward grabbed the snake, trying to rescue her.

*She stands in the river with her bare back to Edward, squeezing the water out of her golden hair, oblivious to his presence. Edward is breathless. It’s the first woman he’s seen in her natural state, and he doesn’t dare move lest he frighten her away.*

Then he sees the snake.

*It’s a cottonmouth, has to be. It leaves a break in the water, its small reptilian head aiming for her flesh. There’s no decision to be made. On pure instinct, Edward dives in. He swims as hard as he can, GRABBING THE SNAKE.*

Just as it’s about to strike.

*The woman dives back underwater, understandably terrified that a man is coming after her.*

EDWARD. No, it’s okay! I got it. I got the snake.

*As the splashing subsides, Edward looks at what he holds in his hands. Which isn’t a snake at all, but rather a commons stick. And a non-threatening one at that* (August, 2003: 40).

From the quotation above, even though the snake turned out to be a floating stick, the fact that Edward tried to save her is a proof that he is not only a courageous man but also a sincere person. His effort in saving the woman displayed his selfless attitudes. He ignored the danger that would possibly come to him by approaching the snake that was about to attack her.

In this story, Edward was characterized as physically handsome and he caught the attraction of the mayor’s daughter, Jenny. They held a celebration for Edward and he found himself tossed around dancing with everybody there.

*Beamens daughter JENNY (8) hides behind his father, peering around to look at the handsome stranger.*

...
The whole town is there in celebration of its newest citizen, Edward Bloom. Before he can protest, two WOMEN have grabbed him by the arms, pulling him in to dance with them. The resulting dance number seems both choreographed and complete chaos. From FARMER to BAKER’S WIFE, everyone wants to dance with Edward, who finds himself tossed around like a stick caught in a whirlpool. Still, he’s having a blast. Jenny grabs both his hands, and they spin wildly. Beamen plucks his LAUGHING daughter away to dance with her. Then Mildred cuts in to dance with Edward. It’s hard to hear over the MUSIC. MILDRED. Jenny thinks you’re quite a catch. We all do (August, 2003: 42).

The story above once again emphasized that Edward was a socially charming person, as has previously seen in the story of Karl the Giant. He was easy to be liked and approached. People in Spectre liked him and they hoped that Edward would never leave the town. When he decided to leave, they were visibly disappointed by his decision, and convinced themselves that Edward had gone crazy.

This story shows that Edward was not only physically handsome but also displayed determined, courageous, and socially charming traits as his dominant characteristics.

5. The Circus

In the present time setting, Edward himself told this story. He was telling it to Will’s wife Josephine. She asked him about his wedding and he told her the whole stories of how he and Sandra met. Starting from the first time they met at a circus show. For him it was a love at first sight.

Edward and Karl came by a circus show. One of their main shows was an appearance of a very big human being named Colossus. Mr. Calloway the circus owner-and-ringmaster was very proud of Colossus. Unimpressed, Edward
presented Karl the giant in front of them. Mr. Calloway directly asked Karl to work with him.

While Karl was signing his contract, Edward saw a beautiful young woman and fell in love at the first sight. He tried to catch up with her but she was already leaving the location. He lost track of her but eventually found hope in Mr. Calloway who claimed to have known her family. Desperate, Edward asked Mr. Calloway to hire him. He traded his services for free in exchange for information each month.

In his third year in the circus, Edward did not have her name yet nor the address, only trivial things. Though trivial things had made him happy, after three years, Edward could not wait any longer to meet her, so he went to Mr. Calloway’s trailer to talk about it. Unfortunately, instead of Mr. Calloway, a massive black dog bursted out of the trailer and knocked him down. They wrestled, but Edward had no advantage since it was not a mere dog, but a werewolf. Mr. Soggybottom the clown, with teary eyes, aimed the revolver loaded with silver bullet to the beast, but Edward, quickly learned about the situation, prevented the bullet from killing the beast by sacrificing his own body.

He found a way to fight it without hurting him, which is with a stick to play fetch. After dawn, the dog turned back into Mr. Calloway. He was moved by Edward’s action and he told him her name and where he can find her. After receiving enough information, Edward straightly departed to see her.

Once again, Edward was seen as a determined young man. Edward is a man of his word. He never settled for anything less than what he wanted. If he
wanted to go find his fate, he would not stop until he had found what he was pursuing. He found his new ambition in this story; he met the girl who he believed was his future wife. In promise of meeting her again, he spent three years working in the Circus. He worked there and instead of money, he received information of her every month as the payment.

AMOS. Kid. Don’t waste your time. She’s out of your league.  
As Amos starts to walk away, Edward hurries to catch up with him. Karl’s follows as well.  
EDWARD. What do you mean? You don’t even know me.  
AMOS. Sure I do. You were hot shit back in Hickville, but here in the real world, you got squat. You don’t have a plan. You don’t have a job. You don’t have anything but clothes on your back.  
EDWARD. I’ve got a whole backpack full of clothes!  
He points to the bleachers, where no backpack is to be found.  
EDWARD (CONT’D). realizing Someone stole my backpack.  
AMOS. Kid, you were a big fish in a small pond. This here is the ocean, and you’re drowning. Take my advice and go back to Puddleville. You’ll be happy there.  
Getting in front of Amos, Edward stops him.  
EDWARD. Wait. You said I don’t have a plan. I do. I’m going to find that girl and marry her and spend the rest of my life with her.  
Amos smiles, amused.  
EDWARD (CONT’D). I don’t have a job, but I would have a job if you gave me one. And I may not have much, but I have more determination than any man you’re ever going to meet.  
AMOS. Sorry, kid. I don’t do charity.  
EDWARD. I’ll work night and day, and you won’t have to pay me. You just have to tell me who she is (August, 2003: 58-59).  
The quotation above, showed how Edward claimed that he was a determined man, and not only claimed it; he was ready to prove it to Mr. Calloway. Even though it took him three years to finally meet her, he spent each month working with endless passion and determination.  
He did everything beyond perfection. He did everything that he thought necessary in pursuing his aim, in this case, pleasing Mr. Calloway. He did not do anything halfheartedly.
EDWARD (V.O.). From that moment on, I did everything Mr. Calloway asked, and a lot of things he didn’t. I’d go three days without stopping to eat, and four days without sleeping (August, 2003: 59).

That was the proof that he really did what he said he would. In this case, his hardworking quality was more inclining to his determined characteristic. After Mr. Calloway agreed to hire him, Edward did everything passionately, he convinced Mr. Calloway that he was truly in love with the girl, and that he would do everything it might take to meet her. Not only he was passionate in doing things, he was also enthusiastic for every fact given as his payment of the month.

They fueled his spirit and he managed to survive three years working with every latest bit of information he received each month. Blinded by the enthusiasm of getting a piece of information, he never suspected Mr. Calloway of cheating him.

To be exact, Edward was blinded by his love for her. He was a loving man.

EDWARD. Mr. Calloway! It’s been a month today.

*Amos stops, looks at the young man. Finally...*

AMOS. This girl, the love of your life. Her favorite flower is daffodils.

*He walks away. We PUSH IN on Edward, enraptured by the concept.*

EDWARD. Daffodils. *(to Karl)* Daffodils!

INT. STABLES – DAY

Edward shovels shit in the nastiest stables you’ve ever seen. But all he can think about is...

EDWARD. *(to himself)* Daffodils!

... *CLOSE ON Edward, lost in quiet reverie, pondering his latest bit of information.*

EDWARD. College! She’s going to college!

... *Under a full moon, Edward feeds the animals.*

EDWARD. *(to himself)* Music! She likes music. I like music too! *(August, 2003: 60-61)*

Edward was a loving person. He was faithful and passionate. This trait was visible in every story involving the girl, including this story. He truly emphasized
what he felt in every word he say, every action he took and every decision he made. He was head over heel in love with her.

INT. BIG TOP – NIGHT – CONTINUOUS
As Amos pulls Karl aside to give him the hard sell, Edward notices a BEAUTIFUL YOUNG WOMAN (16) leaving with her family. She’s wearing a blue dress and hat. For no good reason, she looks back at Edward.
The two make eye contact. And as they do, all motion FREEZES. A fiery baton remains mid-twirl, flames locked in place. A spilled box of popcorn hangs in mid-air, each kernel like a snowflake. Even the elephant is mid-poop.
Only Edward is free to move, winding his way between the frozen bodies, ducking underneath arms to get closer and closer to this woman.
EDWARD (V.O.) (CONT’D). They say when you meet the love of your life, time stops. And that’s true. What they don’t tell you, is that once time starts again, it moves extra fast to catch up.
Suddenly, everything RUSHES. The crowd becomes blur, and the young woman is lost in its wake. Now it’s Edward who’s frozen, helpless in time (August, 2003: 56).

He was not only sincere but also emphatic. He was sincere whenever he dealt with people that he thought as his friends. Edward successfully convinced the circus owner-and-ringmaster Amos Calloway to take Karl to work in his circus, and thus provided Karl with not only job and food, but also friends and home. More than his sincere trait, the most prevailing and significant trait that he got here was his empathic characteristic. When he was dealing with the dog form of Mr. Calloway, he did not want to harm him, even though the dog might have killed him. He chose to protect it even when the dog was still trying to attack him.

Edward wrestles with the beast, its mouth snapping at his throat.
Blocking with an arm, Edward tries to push himself free, but the creature’s hands – it has hand instead of paws – hold on tight.
Entwined, they roll across the dirt. The other nearby CARNIES scatter for cover. Mr. Soggybottom pulls a revolver out of his clown suit. Loads a silver bullet.
Edward finally succeeds in throwing the beast off. He rolls to his feet.
The hell hound squares back on its haunches, GROWLING, ready for another leap. Mr. Soggybottom sheds a clown tear, aiming the revolver at the dog.

At the last moment...

EDWARD (CONT’D). No, wait!

Edward moves just as Mr. Soggybottom FIRES. The bullet catches Edward in the shoulder, knocking him down (August, 2003: 61-62).

The reference above also provides the impression that Edward is not the type of man to hold grudge against anybody that had ever did him wrong. Edward still tried to get out of the situation without harming Mr. Calloway, even after all his tricky act in keeping Edward work hard for three years without paying his fee. The notion of his sincerity was also observable in his action after he got shot. His empathic trait also made him tried to ease Mr. Calloway’s feeling by convincing him that he had not killed anything. From that incident, he discovered that most things considered evil or wicked are simply lonely, and lacking in the social niceties (August, 2003: 62).

He is socially charming; people knew him and recognized his face. Not only Ashton people had known Edward’s reputation back in Ashton. Mr. Calloway had heard about him before he met Edward. In other words, he was famous. Mr. Calloway said that Sandra was out of Edward’s league, indicating that he already knew who he was.

EDWARD. What do you mean? You don’t even know me.

AMOS. Sure I do. You were hot shit back in Hickville, but here in the real world, you got squat. You don’t have a job. You don’t have anything but the clothes on your back (August, 2003: 58).

The fact that Edward was also capable of befriending the sly circus owner Mr. Calloway, even after he underestimated his worth and cunningly made him work for free for three years, was a proof of his socially charming character. Even
after he encountered his transformed form of a massive black dog, he still tried to protect Mr. Calloway’s life and to understand his situation. His kindness and understanding touched Mr. Calloway’s heart and from that moment on, he became his friend and ally.

AMOS (CONT’D). I was wrong about you kid. You may not have much, but what you got, you got a lot of. You could get any girl.
EDWARD. There’s only one I want.
A beat.
AMOS. Her name is Sandra Templeton. She’s going to Auburn. The semester’s almost over, so you better hurry.
EDWARD. Thank you.
AMOS. Good luck, kid (August, 2003: 63).

This story was all about Edward’s ambition and determination in pursuing his love. Everything he did in the circus was all based on the promise of meeting her. He was a loving and faithful man; he always knew his purpose and never once turning over for something else. Overall, this story offered the determined, loving, emphatic, and socially charming characteristic as the dominant trait of Edward.

6. Sandra Templeton

Immediately after Edward reached Sandra’s sorority house in Auburn University, he declared his love for her. Unfortunately, for him, at the moment Sandra had been engaged to his fellow Ashton boy, Don Price. Edward did not give up. He exclaimed to her that he would continue pursuing her. He conveyed his love for her through various crazy-but-romantic acts, involving a class’s projector, plane, and ten thousand daffodils. When her fiancé, Don, found out about him, Sandra asked him to not hurt Don and he promised her he would not,
which resulted in him getting beaten and ended up in hospital for four weeks.
Edward lost in fighting Don but won Sandra’s heart.

Courage is needed not only in dangerous situation, but also in acts of pursuing someone you love. When Edward finally reached Sandra, he straightforwardly stated his intention. He did not mind his reputation or even thought about being shy. Although he was in the face of a giggling crowd of the sorority residents, he was not afraid of conveying his feeling to the person he loved. Not many could stand an embarrassing situation like that.

EXT. SORORITY HOUSE – DAY
Edward stands with a bouquet of daffodils in front of a half open door. Through the crack we can see the edge of a YOUNG WOMAN, talking in hushed tones with another girl we can’t see. Finally, a decision is reached. The door opens to reveal the woman of Edward’s dreams, Sandra Kay Templeton. She’s effortlessly beautiful, pure and simple as sunlight. He can’t believe he’s finally reached her. He half-laughs, nervous. That makes her laugh, not sure what’s going on.
EDWARD, You don’t know me, but my name is Edward Bloom and I am in love with love. I’ve spent the last three years working to find out who you are. I’ve been shot and stabbed and trampled a few times, had my ribs broken twice, but it’s all worth it to see you here, now, and to finally get to talk to you. I knew that from the first moment I saw you at the circus. And I know it now more than ever (August, 2003: 64).

Mostly, in pursuing his love of his life, Edward’s determined and hardworking traits were visible. He was presented as the most determined and passionate person when it came to him to win the heart of Sandra Templeton. He knew Sandra was engaged to someone else but he did not give up.

EDWARD, (V.O.). Fate has a cruel way of circling around on you. After all this work to leave Ashton, the girl I loved was now engaged to one of its biggest jerks. He EXITS FRAME, leaving only the sorority house in the background. EDWARD (V.O.) (CONT’D). There’s time when a man needs to accept that his destiny is lost, that the ship has sailed, and that only a fool would continue.
A beat. Edward steps back INTO FRAME, looking at a sorority house. EDWARD (V.O.) (CONT’D). The truth is, I’ve always been a fool. We CIRCLE as he shouts:
EDWARD (CONT’D). Sandra Templeton! I love you! And I am going to marry you! (August, 2003: 66).

Not only he had not given up, Edward also did various things to convince his love to Sandra. After he declared his insistence in pursuing her heart, he was then unstoppable. In Sandra’s class, he wrote on the projection “I Love Sandra Templeton” that merrily surprised her. He also made a floating giant sky-written heart above her head when she’s walking outside. He also filled the lawn in front of her sorority house with ten thousand daffodils, her favorite flower. He stood amidst the sea of flowers, and he had been there for six hours.

Sandra walks out to him. She’s smiling, confused, joyful and scared. All down Greek Street, STUDENTS are coming out to see the display. SANDRA. Daffodils?
EDWARD. They’re your favorite flower.
SANDRA. How did you get so many?
EDWARD, I called everywhere in five states and explained this was the only way I could get my wife to marry me. Out of nowhere, a tear drops down Sandra’s cheek. She wipes it off.
SANDRA. You don’t even know me.
EDWARD. I have the rest of my life to find out (August, 2003: 67).

From the conversation above, it could also be seen that Edward is not only determined but also an optimistic person. He pursued an almost total stranger but he was certain that everything would be great with her.

Like in The Circus Story, in this particular story Edward did everything out of his love for Sandra. His words and action reflected his loving trait. His passion and faith were all dedicated to Sandra. The dominant characteristics were obviously his courageous, determined, hardworking, and loving characteristic.
7. The War

This story was the story narrated by Edward when he was explaining to Josephine why he and Sandra never had a church wedding.

When Edward was in the hospital and managed to be with Sandra, he received a letter that demanded him to give his service to the military. It turned out that he would have to serve in the military for three years. In the army, he took every hazardous assignment he could find, in hope of getting his time cut to less than a year. He could not stand being away from Sandra for another three years.

In one of the assignment, he had a little trouble in jumping out of the plane, causing him to fly separately from his troop. He landed in the backstage of an entertainment stage for the Chinese soldiers, their opponent of the war. He hid in the dressing room for one of the entertainers, a Chinese Siamese twin. He successfully convinced them to come with him returned back to America, providing all the helps that he need to get out of the enemy’s territory.

He took the risk and faced every danger without a flinch. He was courageous for taking risky assignments and dealt with them. The assignments he took were all dangerous, his last assignment made him land in front of a thousand Chinese soldiers. He was alone in the middle of the enemy. He stayed composed and braced himself to ask help from a Chinese entertainer in that place. Then, he took the risk to come home with her through an uncommon and dangerous way.

Edward was a smart man. He always thought differently and sometimes far ahead from his companions. He was able to manipulate his task so that he could reduce his time to less than one year. He always got one-step ahead in
everything, in his sending to the enemy’s territory, he used the flying time to study the local language.

INT. ARMY AIRPLANE – NIGHT

*With a buzz cut and paratrooper gear, Edward squats with a dozen other SOLDIERS. The noise of the ENGINES is deafening, but Edward is engrossed in an Asian phrasebook* (August, 2003: 72).

This additional knowledge successfully helped him later in communicating his intention to the Chinese entertainer Ping and Jing in Chinese, persuaded them to help him escape and returned home. He is not a reckless person that only has courage to take every risk, he is also smart and fully prepared and stay alerted to keep his head stay intact. He knew his every move would risk his life, and therefore he came at them not bare handed. He touched their heart with his love story and enticed them with a better job in show business. He offered them a chance to come with him to America, as he knew they would give him easier escape from China.

EDWARD (V.O.) (CONT’D). We put together an elaborate plan for escape, involving a whaling ship to Russia, a barge to Cuba and a small, dirty canoe to Miami. We all knew it would be dangerous.

*Still subtitled:*

PING. What are we supposed to do when we get to America?

EDWARD. I can get you bookings. I know the biggest man in show business.

JING. Bob Hope?

EDWARD. Bigger (August, 2003: 76-77)

With his socially charming nature, Edward always successfully turned his enemy to be his ally. Like when he was dealing with Karl, the same pattern also occurred when he ran to the siamese twin Ping and Jing that was working as an entertainer for the soldier in the enemy’s side. He approached them with his story and they were captivated with the story he told them about his future wife. His
story softened their heart and they agreed to come with him and helped him escape.

EDWARD. Please, I need your help.
PING. What makes you think we’ll help you?
Edward pulls a photo out of his flak jacket. It’s Sandra.
CROSSFADE TO:
VARIOUS SHOOT
EDWARD (V.O.). Over the next hour, I described my love for Sandra Kay Templeton, and the ordeal that brought me before them. As it had always been, this love was my salvation. It was destined to be.
Hearing the story, Jing wipes away a tear. Even Ping is a little affected (August, 2003: 76)

He did not let the fact that he had to serve the military for three years halted him from fulfilling his ambition to get together with Sandra as soon as possible. He did everything that could help him accomplish his ambition; he risked his life so that he could reduce his time in military by taking dangerous assignments. He did everything to survive a near death experience against a thousand Chinese soldiers. His determined trait made him never once gave up in returning to Sandra. Moreover, according to what he saw in the glass eye, he knew that that was not how he goes.

In this story, the dominant characteristics were courageous, smart, socially charming, and determined. It also can be seen that Sandra was still the only reason and ambition that Edward had. His love and faith made him do everything passionately. The passion that he had made him capable to keep moving forward, allowing him survived every difficult situation.
8. Norther Winslow

Once again, Will recited the story of Edward’s life. This time he recalled his memory while he was sorting out Edward’s stuffs in the basement storage. He found some things that brought him back to his father’s tale.

When he was lost in China, the government considered him dead and the news not only broke Sandra’s heart, but also his chance in getting a job. Limited in choices, he took the job as a travelling salesman. He sold peculiar products magnificently. His achievements prompted him to save the money so he could buy Sandra a proper house.

While he was waiting in line to deposit his money to his account in a bank, he met Norther Winslow—the poet who was last seen in Spectre. As they were chitchatting each other, Norther revealed to him that he was about to rob the bank and doing so while they were talking. He demanded Edward to cooperate with him. Edward decided that the best way might be to keep anybody from being hurt and get along with the robbery. While escaping from the town, Edward shared his knowledge in prevailing economic condition with him, which eventually inspired Norther to go to Wall Street to try his luck. Following Edward’s advice, Norther successfully gained fortune there. For his first million dollars, he sent Edward a check for ten thousand that he said to be a reward for being his career advisor. Edward later used it to buy his wife a proper house with a white picket fence like the one he had always dreamt.

Edward was officially deceased, but he was still willing to work. With his few options, he took a job as a traveling salesman for his dream of buying Sandra
a proper house with a white picket fence. His determination in working on whatever he had left was the proof that he was a hardworking person. He traveled far and with his passionate trait, he became successful and soon added other products and other cities in his territory.

Edward is a cordial person; he was chatty and outgoing. He charmed strangers easily and everybody liked him.

EDWARD (V.O.). With my prospects few, I took a job as a travelling salesman. It suited me. If there’s one thing you can say about Edward Bloom, it’s that I am a social person (August, 2003: 85)

He travelled to sell a product named “Hand Around the House”. It is not a common product, but Edward’s ability in attracting people’s attention and trust made him a successful salesman. He expanded his territory, stretching from the coast to western Texas. He traveled a lot and gained new friends everywhere he went. The words he used to introduce his product were the evident of his persuasive trait. Using his words and gestures, he charmed people to buy his stuff.

EXT. COUNTY FAIR – DAY [STORY]
On a low platform, Edward pitches a brilliant new product to the crowd. EDWARD. I’ve traveled from Tennessee to Timbuktu, and if there’s one thing people have in common, is we could all use a hand around the house. Edward sets down a contraption, which looks something like a metal lava lamp. Like a flower, it unfolds to reveal five fingers and a thumb. This is the Hand Around the House. (TM)

EDWARD. Why, with this product you can…

QUICK MONTAGE as he demonstrates:
EDWARD. Open a jar. Open a letter. Scratch yourself while wearing mittens. Hold a book. Hold a baby. Hold the dog away from kittens. It’s strong enough, you can do a handstand with no hands at all. Indeed, a remarkably agile Edward is able to support his entire weight on it. The crowd APPLAUDS.

EDWARD. You can use it to point out important information. Or dangers. Or beautiful women.
The hand points a finger at an HEAVYSET MAN IN OVERALLS.
EDWARD. We’re still working on that one.
In his meeting with Norther, Edward was sensed as an inspiring person. Norther was inspired by Edward’s word back in Spectre and decided to leave and travelled. As what Norther said “Everyday a new adventure, that’s my motto” (August, 2003: 87), it marked his change of view towards life. Edward was genuinely happy he had took a part of Norther’s improvement.

Edward chose to respect his friendship with Norther over his sense of justice. When Norther told Edward to help him rob the bank, he took the nerve to ignore the law and to help his friend. It made him a courageous man in defending his friend against anything.

EDWARD (CONT’D). So what are you up to now?
NORTHER WINSLOW. I’m robbing this place.
Reaching the front of the line, Norther pulls two pistols out of his coat, FIRING both into the ceiling.
SCREAMS all around. The skinny SECURITY GUARD makes a half-hearted reach for his gun, but Norther waves him off. The guard takes out his gun and slides it over.
NORTHER WINSLOW (CONT’D). to Edward. Would you mind grabbing that?
There’s nothing threatening about his delivery – he might as well be asking for a Budweiser. Still, Edward senses it would be best to do as he says. He takes the guard’s gun (August, 2003: 88).

Being informed that the bank was actually bankrupt, Edward sacrificed his own money for Norther to take during the robbery, so that he would not go empty-handed. He also helped Norther escape using his own car. While escaping Edward gave some financial advice for Norther that resulted in Norther being a successful tycoon. Norther became a very successful businessman and he did not forget that he got his success by his friendship with Edward; he sent him cheque for ten thousand dollar as a career advisor (August, 2003: 89). Edward had no second thought in helping friends. He was sincere.
In their escape, Edward showed Norther that the Bank was actually bankrupt, and then he shared his knowledge about what actually happened with the economy. It shows that Edward was a smart person for he turned out to have a lot of knowledge and had many potential but he never had the chance to use it. Even so, he still could manage to be magnificently successful in his current job.

EDWARD (V.O.). I told Norther about the vagaries’ of Texas oil money and its effect on real estate price, and how lax enforcement of fiduciary process had made savings and loans particularly vulnerable. Hearing this news, Norther was left with one conclusion:

EXT. TEXAS ROAD – DAY
Norther leans in the driver’s side window.
NORTHER WINSLOW. I should go to Wall Street. That’s where all the money is.

Edward looks over at Norther, the reality sinking in.
EDWARD (V.O.). I knew then that while my days as a criminal were over, Norther’s were just beginning (August, 2003: 89-90).

In this particular story, Edward’s most dominant characteristics were **hardworking, persuasive, smart, courageous, and sincere**. However, Edward could also be considered inspiring in a specific part of this story, but that traits were not a significant trait for the story.

9. Later Spectre

A woman named Jenny Hill told the last story of Edward’s tall tales. In his effort in sorting out his father’s paper, Will found a deed that was signed under her name. He went to Spectre and found her house. He asked her if she had an affair with her father. Learning that Edward was dying, she told Will Edward’s last story. Here, the story and reality begin weaving together as Jenny shares the story.

On one of his journey, returning home after three weeks on the road, Edward came across a thunderstorm with a very heavy rainfall. The rain made
him stop because he barely could see anything in front of him. All of sudden, his
car was underwater.

The flood had brought his car stuck on a tree and he was forced to walk his
way to the nearest town. The nearest town that he found turned out to be Spectre.
Not the bright and cheerful he could remember, but Spectre in its worst condition.
The town was on sale and two corporations were trying to win it over in order to
make something else out of it.

Edward then tried to save the town by buying the whole of it. He was not a
wealthy man, but he had made many other people rich. So he asked them for a
favor and successfully bought the town and returned it to the original state.

The story of Spectre brings proof that Edward was a socially charming
person and could still be an ambitious man if he had the right purpose. It was the
evidence that his friendship that he built throughout those years were not vain.
Edwards knew that he would never be able to buy a town out of his own money.
Even so, he knew he had friends that could help him to fulfill his new ambition in
bringing back Spectre to its original state. His intention became possible because
he knew he had many people on his back that would make everything possible

INT. NORTHER WINSLOW’S MANHATTAN – DAY
Edward pitches his plan to Norther.
JENNY. (V.O.). He was never a wealthy man, but he had made other men
rich, and now he asked for their favors.
INT./EXT. VARIOUS LOCATIONS – DAY
VARIOUS SHOTS: expressive and passionate as always, Edward talks to
Ping, Jing and Amos Calloway.
JENNY (V.O.). Most of them had never seen Spectre – they only had
Edward’s words to describe it. That’s all they needed. He sold them on the
dream.
JING. You can structure it as a historical trust. But you’ll need every
contiguous piece of property. It’s all or nothing (August, 2003: 98).
The quotation above also showed that he was a smart man; he never faced a problem without having any solution. Edward is not a wealthy man, but he knows what he got and he used all his ability to save the town. His way of solving problems showed that he is a quick thinking person. If he did not know how to do it, he would find somebody who did. Edward would get it done in whatever way. From his friends he knew that in order to save Spectre, he had to buy everything in it.

Edward was a sincere and generous man. Spectre was the most visible evidence of this characteristic. He saved a town and he took nothing from the residents. His good intention can be seen from the first time he learned about the town’s condition and decided to buy it, so it would not be ruined.

EXT. TOWN OF SPECTRE – VARIOUS SHOTS
We look around the town, on and off Main Street. There are “FOR SALE” signs in many of the windows.
JENNY (V.O.). A new road had brought the outside world to Spectre, and with it, banks, liens and debt. Almost everywhere you looked, people were bankrupt.

EXT. SPECTRE – DAY
We slowly MOVE THROUGH a foreclosure auction to find Edward watching. Two very corporate MEN IN SUITS, stick out among the bidders.
JENNY (V.O.). Two different corporations were looking at buying the town, if they could get the price low enough. One wanted to open a chicken processing plant. The other, a municipal dump. Either way, Spectre would be destroyed.
Edward raises his hand.
EDWARD. Fifty-thousand!
Everyone turns to look at this new bidder.
JENNY (V.O.). And so Edward Bloom decided to buy the town, in order to save it (August, 2003: 97-98).

As he tried to buy the town piece by piece, he did not ask anything from the resident. He continued to fulfill his target in buying the entire town that way.
He did it passionately, like how he always did in everything. He finished buying
the entire town in six months.

JENNY (V.O.). Whatever he bought, the people were not asked to leave or
pay rent or anything. They were just asked to keep doing as they were
doing. In that way, he could make sure the town would never die (August,

Edward is obviously a kind person but he is not a meek one. He faced an
obstacle in buying the whole town as a resident named Jenny Hill refused to sell
his house to Edward. She refused his offer mostly because a personal reason, as
she had expected that Edward would have come earlier. Even his generosity could
not move her conviction.

JENNY. Now let me get this straight. You’ll buy the swamp from me, but
I’ll stay in it. You’ll own the house, but it’ll still be mine. I’ll be here, and
you’ll come and go as you please to one place or another. Do I have that
right?
Strange to hear it put that way, but –
EDWARD. In so many words, yes.
JENNY. Then I don’t think so Mr. Bloom. If nothing is going to change,
I’d just as soon it not change in the way it hasn’t been changing all this
time.
EDWARD. It’s not like you’re going to lose anything. You can ask
anyone in town. I’ve been nothing if not generous. I want the best for
everyone.
A long beat.
JENNY. Mr. Bloom, why are you buying this land? Some sort of midlife
crisis? Instead of buying a convertible, you buy a town?
He looks at her, puzzled and surprised. No one has really asked before.
EDWARD. Helping people makes me happy.
JENNY. I’m not convinced you should be happy.
EDWARD. I’m sorry. Have I offended you?
She finally turns to face him.
JENNY. No, you did exactly what you promised. You came back. I was

Edward said that helping people makes him happy; it was a proof that he was also
a helpful person. He liked to help people in need. He could not stand the fact that
some people that he knew were helplessly suffering. This particular story was also
a proof that Edward was not easy to give up, as he always was an ambitious and
determined man. He failed in convincing her but he did not give up. It can be seen
in the moment when he accidentally broke the door and asked to go and leave it.
Most men in that situation would accept their failure and move on. But Edward
was not like most men (August, 2003: 102). He came back later with his friend
Karl to fix the door and everything he found necessary to fix until the house no
longer resembled itself. Jenny was moved by his effort in fixing his house and
agreed to sell it to Edward. With that, Edward left the town.

His successful effort in convincing Jenny was also a proof of his smart
characteristic. This story also proved him a faithful man. There was one time
when Jenny drew herself close to Edward expecting him to kiss her. Edward
politely refused her and she understood his reason.

She comes closer. Edward holds his ground. She takes his hand, lifting his
hat up to the peg. She’s very close – just a half-inch from kissing him when

-- Edward gently holds her back.
EDWARD. No.
She freezes, stunned and humiliated. She pulls away.
EDWARD (CONT’D). Don’t. Don’t be embarrassed. I should never have
let you think that...

(beat)
I am in love with my wife.
JENNY. I know.
EDWARD. And from the moment I saw her until the moment I die, she’s
the only one.
JENNY. Lucky girl.
EDWARD. I’m sorry, Jenny. I am.
With that, he begins to leaves (August, 2003: 104).

Edward owned a town, but he never brought it up. He was satisfied just by
knowing that the town was at the moment perfect like what it used to be. He left it
in once again its best condition and he never came back. His intention was always sincere.

**EXT. SPECTRE – MAGIC HOUR**

*Edward takes a final look at this perfect little town.*

JENNY (V.O.). One day, Edward Bloom left, and never returned to the town he’d saved.

*He climbs in his car and starts the engine* (August, 2003: 104).

This story was a special story. Edward was presented and characterized as a flawless person that was **socially charming, smart, determined, sincere, generous, helpful, and faithful.** Moreover, all those virtuous characteristics did not come from Edward or through Will’s memory. This time, the storyteller was actually one of the characters that had appeared in one of Edward’s stories, the Spectre story to be exact. The story came from Jenny Hill, the woman who loved Edward and had the second chance in knowing him a little closer.

Edward in the actual setting and Edward in Will’s memory told most of the stories. This is the last story from the series of Edward’s epic journey. This story did come not from Edward but from another person, another point of view. This was a proof that Edward’s characteristics were in fact virtuous characteristics because Jenny’s story strengthens the stories that seems too good to be true.

Jenny can be considered a key point of this movie’s plot because if not from her, Will would have never believed all of those stories. From the beginning, the lack of evidence or witness was the main concern of Will’s struggle in believing his father’s stories. He even believed that his father was cheating on his mother. “My Father talked about a lot of things he never did, and I’m sure he did a lot of things he never talked about. I’m just trying to reconcile the two” (August,
2003: 95). Jenny’s testimony made him realize that what Edward always tells was not completely a fabricated story.

After this story, the Edward in the present time setting passed away and his funeral’s mourner were people Will recognized as the characters that ever appeared in his father’s story. Though, they were actually less marvelous than what his father’s description, the existence of those people were more than enough for him to finally believe in Edward’s stories.

B. The Moral Values of the Tall Tales

The analysis in finding the moral values will be divided in three steps. First, the researcher applies the theory of story to find what the meaning of a story was and why Edward tells such an exaggerated version of his stories. After that, the theory on moral values is used in finding the conclusion. Finally, the researcher will find Edward’s characteristics suitable with the characteristic of virtuous man based on the basic virtues taken from the theory of virtue.

The act of Edward telling tall tales are still considered as the basic of a human nature. People fictionalized their memory so it becomes a story to tell a friend when they met one, just the same as Edward. Everywhere in human societies, stories are found in every conversation, jokes, and urban legends. It is a common act, in Edward’s case, the stories are just overly exaggerated compared than an average life stories.

According to the amount of times he spent telling stories, he was a storyteller, though as we go see through the theories, his stories are not reliable in part of its truth. For example, when Will finally saw the characters of his father’s
story in the funeral; Karl was a real thing; he was not 12 feet tall, but at least six-eight (August, 2003: 120). The conjoined twins Ping and Jing were also seen at the funeral and they turned out to be two separated twins (August, 2003: 121). The moment that Will saw them was the moment that confirmed that Will’s opinion about his father were both right and wrong, the existence of these peoples proofed the tales to be the true life stories of his father but the featured details of these people was also the proof that not all content of his stories were true. The presented facts were the proof that they really were exaggerated in the stories and they could be considered as a representatives for many of the tales that was yet to be confirmed.

From the disposition of the stories, Edward’s stories are considered as tales. Tale being a more evocative name than story, writers (or tellers) sometimes calls their stories “tales” as if to imply something handed down from the past (Kenedy, 2012: 11). Edward’s stories are in fact something that was handed down from the past; it is just that Will was the first hand listener. Their nature that recounts the deeds of a superhero or of the storyteller, that is usually told with a straight face to listeners who take pleasure in scoffing at it, is making those tales counted as tall tales. Tall tales are the varieties of tales. Tales are one of the three variations of fiction, a name for stories not entirely factual, but at least partially shaped, made up, imagined (Kennedy, 2010: 5). Those theories made Edward’s stories are classified as fictions.

Edward was a natural storyteller but he might be telling his tales without knowing what kind of effect are left in the listeners mind. The field of religion and
history had proven to us that stories are one of the most effective ways to plant ideas in human mind. Edward was using the same method to engrave some ideas in his son’s mind. The intention was indirectly spotted when Edward said “then you spend years trying to corrupt and mislead this child, fill its head with nonsense and still it turns out perfectly fine” (August, 2003: 21).

The study by Markus Appel shows that people that more often come in contact and impacted with works of fiction are mostly had a stronger belief in “just world”, making them more optimistic and had a higher sense of morality (Gottschall, 2012: 136). The stories are theoretically good for Will because it meant to be the base on his live so that he would be a better person in the future.

Most of the fiction is moral fiction; it puts us in the position of approving of decent, prosocial behavior and disapproving of the greed of antagonist—of characters who are belly and balls (Gottschall, 2013: 132). It is meant to preach, instruct, and influence the reader/listener with morality and has positive effects on readers/listeners’ moral development and sense of empathy.

The numerous time of storytelling, the yarn of fish story, and other short tales were all considered charming and entertaining for almost the entire listener. Unfortunately, it has an exception on Will, who finds the never-verified tall tales exasperating to the point that he stops speaking to his father for three years. Will refused to accept them as Edward’s life stories and received the act as a mere storytelling. Moreover, he discovered that the facts in the stories are mostly fictions and his father refused to tell his life’s stories in any other way. He felt that he had been lied to by his own father and he grew up hating his father’s ‘lies’.
He expected the stories to be memoirs, and as many other people, he expected true stories from the memoirist. But, most memoirist do not tell true stories; they tell “truthy” ones (Gottschall, 2012: 161). Will addressed his father as a liar, huffing about being tricked by a certain memory scandal, just as people that disappointed by the “truthy” memoirs saying that ‘the writer’ betrayed a sacred trust and brand him as a cheat, liar, and a scoundrel. However, there is a justification of how memoirist tells their stories. According to Gottschall, before judging them of the way they tell their stories, they should look more closely at the way they tell their own;

We spend our lives crafting stories that make us the noble—if flawed—protagonists of first-person dramas. A life story is a “personal myth” about who we are deep down—where we come from, how we got this way, and what it all means. Our life stories are who we are. They are our identity. A life story is not, however, an objective account. A life story is a carefully shaped narrative that is replete with strategic forgetting and skillfully spun meanings (Gottschall, 2012: 161).

Like many other people that tell their stories, Edward was making himself the protagonist of his own stories. He made himself the model of what a good protagonist would do in various occasion. Fiction protagonists tend to be young, attractive, smart, and brave. He made his self appeared to be that way to make him a model protagonist, and people tend to do what a protagonist do. Indeed, this act of him can be considered as lying and it is a wrong act. However, from the benefits and the good experience everybody had, this storytelling act was a morally good action and also a forgivable white-lying. In reaching his goals, Edward may be doing it not in a right way, but he was doing it in a good way.

Moral is a clue of how to act in right or good. Moral values are understood to be those that make a person good purely and simply as a person (Fagothey,
1985: 75). One of many ways in considering a good moral character in a person is
the act, consequences, and intention. If the act is good, brings good consequences
and comes from a good intention, that act is virtuous. A virtuous act expresses a
good moral character. A person can be assessed as a virtuous person if he had
virtues as his dominant traits in his characteristics.

In finding out the moral values of the tall tales revealed from the
characterization that had been studied from the tales itself, the researcher is
dealing with two main issues from the movie script. They are: (1) The act Edward
did by telling the tall tales, the motivation and purpose of the act, the view that he
did that as the variation of moral education because Edward is a parent and he
insist in giving his son a good example. He did it through story instead of direct
eamples.

The other issue is (2) the value that can be taken from the tall tales itself.
The characteristic that can be considered virtue is the good example Edward
imposed himself did in the past, no matter what really happened. He did it in order
to make himself a hero of the story, to set good example for Will that to be a
virtuous person is a good thing beyond wealth and status. He provided those kind
of example so that Will could be sincerely happy of his own deed, to live easier
among other people and how to make friends and ally.

In valuing the act of Edward telling the tall tales the researcher is
reviewing, from the present time setting of the movie script, the consequences of
his storytelling activity are to his surrounding, mainly to Will. The consequences
that happened to Will is the answer of the question asked in the problem formulation, the moral values that will set a good lesson for Will as the listener.

From the characterization of Edward in the tall tales, there are characteristics of him that can be said as virtues. These characteristics are listed as the virtues of Edward based on some consideration that is taken from the theory of virtue. Virtue is the thinking that is the trait of a character that grows from his own inner nature, not something that is come from command or any external influences. In the tales, Edward never put his action and decision based on external influences, they are all comes from his own policy. A virtue is also looked as a trait of a character, manifested in habitual action (Rachel, 1999). These virtues of Edward are his characteristics that appeared more than one time throughout the story. The frequency of this traits appearance can be the foundation of how they are said to be habitual actions.

Some traits are only virtue when it constantly mean in the midpoint between two opposite traits. Most virtue are standing between its own excess and deficiency. The good traits that are belong to Edward are mostly mean, they are not done disproportionately so they are virtuous. The researcher is not making an strict list from particular virtuous principal. There are no exact measures for a trait to be considered virtue; virtues are different according to the person. The researcher are making virtues list that are emerged from the characterization of the major character in the tall tales, Edward Bloom.
1. Courage

Courage, according to Rachel is one of his main four virtues that needed by all people in all times (Rachel, 1999: 186). His statement was not without any consideration; anyone who faces danger, and at different times this includes all of us, needs courage.

Edward obviously has the virtue of courage. His many courageous acts are observed in almost all of the tales. As a young boy, he already showed the traits, he accepted Don’s challenge to go inside the Witch house and then he intentionally ask to see through the glass eye to see how he would die (August, 2003: 13-14). In the tale of Karl the giant, he volunteered himself to solve the town’s problem by talking to the giant, and that was not an act of foolhardiness, because in Edward’s case, he know that he would not die in that way (August, 2003: 29).

He fulfilled his curiosity by choosing the old road out of the town of Ashton. He knew that he would never go back to Ashton and he use the chance to find out what was in the old road that made anybody refused to go through it (August, 2003: 33). Neglecting his safety, he was willing to save a woman from a snake’s approach (August, 2003: 40). When he caught up with the girl he saw in the circus, he courageously confessed his feeling to her in front of her sorority sisters (August, 2003: 64). In the military, he also used the courage to take the hazardous assignment in hope of getting his time cut so he could rush back to his wife-to-be, Sandra (August, 2003: 72).
His encounter with Norther and his choice in helping him robbing the bank rather than defending his money is also a form of courage. He took the choice not because he feared the gun Norther was holding or because he was reckless. He just wanted to help his friend get safely out of the situation.

Courage is important. Because life is full of dangers and without courage, we would be unable to cope with them (Rachel, 1999: 184). So is for Edward, without courage his tremendous feat would not come to action. He would not dare to see the witch, see through her glass eye, and found out his way of death. And without the knowledge he would not dare to face the giant or go outside the town. He would still be the citizen of Ashton, enjoying the peace of life until his old days. There will be no story to be told and a hero to be look up to.

Though virtues are different for different people, courage is one of few virtues that would never be a waste in a character. Everyone needs courage, because no one is so safe that danger may not sometimes arise (Rachel, 1999: 186).

2. Sincerity

Sincerity is concerned with truthfulness and faithfulness in interactions with others (Roth, 1995: 912). In treating other's interest, Edward was always straight, genuine, and reliable. It was told in the tales that he was sincere, kind, emphatic, helpful and generous.

His sincere nature made him polite towards anybody. Edward treated the Old Woman and Karl the Giant nicely. He spoke to them thoughtfully. His intention to help an unknown woman also reflected this virtue. His effort in
helping Karl get a better life also showed that he was a thoughtful and reliable friend.

Not only kind and sincere, Edward was also emphatic. Dealing with a wild merciless dog, he did not directly accuse it as an evil being. He tried to understand its circumstances and ended up protecting the beast (August, 2003: 62). His willingness in helping Norther rob a bank was also a mark that he was reliable and helpful as a friend.

In the tales, Edward’s intention was always good. In the last story, he tried to save a town from demolition. As he tried to buy the whole town piece by piece, he did not ask the resident to pay or leave, he just wanted them to continue doing what they were always doing (August, 2003: 98). His effort in preventing his friend from losing their home was also the proof that he had a helpful trait. That and the fact that he had saved a town and never brings it up to anybody was a mark that he had the virtue of sincerity.

Having the virtue of sincerity is a good thing. It is helpful in interacting with others, it brings comfort to the people we are interacting with. They know that they are dealing with a person that is truthful and genuine, meaning that this person can be trusted in his action and words. Holding people’s trust is like holding the key to almost everything; places, information, etc.

3. Sociality

Edward’s persuasive and socially charming characteristics are the traits of this virtue. Sociality is the virtue in which one has the tendency to associate with others and to form social groups. It deals with the art of friendliness; making
friends, impressing people, persuading people, and cooperating with them. Some
people have it naturally and some other that sees it as a useful trait in dealing with
other people tries to polish it to their own list of traits. To be a social person, one
should be charming and easy to like. Edward’s socially charming and persuasive
characteristic are the traits that represent this virtue.

His ability in making the Old Woman, the giant, and the Siamese twin
Ping and Jing his ally without any force was the form of his socially charming
characteristic. The fact that many people loved and cheered for him in his teenage
year also underlines the characteristic. Everybody in town liked him; they saw
him off in his departing day from Ashton. The people of Ashton made him a
special gathering and gave him many advices, the town’s major also gave him the
Key to the City (August, 2003: 32). Not only in the departure, his arrival in a
small town of Spectre also made the people there over-excitedly welcomed him
and held a celebration for him (August, 2003: 42).

He was famous from his achievement in his younger years back in Ashton.
Famous was another sign of a socially charming person. Amos Calloway from the
circus recognized him as the boy from Ashton (August, 2003: 58). Sandra
Templeton also knew him from his reputation back in Ashton (August, 2003: 65).

He was persuasive. The job he got as a salesman was a huge success
thanks to this trait of him. Not only useful for his work, this trait also gave him a
huge benefit in a difficult time like when he was buying Spectre. He sought help
from his friends and without any necessary hesitation, they all agreed to help him
4. Loyalty

If sociality is all about making and ‘utilizing’ friends, Loyalty is the virtue that takes part as the glue that keeps all those relationships. For Edward, this virtue is emerged in his faithful trait toward his friends and Sandra. The traits are not mentioned as many as the other traits but they are still dominating the characteristics of Edward. The virtue of loyalty is one of Rachel’s four main important virtues;

The idea that there is something morally special about family and friends is, of course, familiar. We do not treat our family and friends as we would treat strangers. We are bound to them by love and affection and we do things for them that we would not do for just anybody. But this is not merely a matter of our being nicer to people we like. The nature of our relationships with family and friends is different from our relationships with other people, and part of the difference is that our duties and responsibilities are different. This seems to be an integral part of what friendship is. How could I be your friend and yet not treat you with special consideration? (Rachel, 1999: 183).

As the tales went on, it became clearer that Edward’s motivation was modest. His effort and time was spent in pursuing and living with Sandra and, in many cases, his attention was mostly fixed on his friend’s interests. His priority was always his relation; Sandra, Will, and his friends.

Edward’s loyalty towards his friends could be traced back to the days he left the town of Ashton, he just made friend with a giant named Karl and in their journey, though Edward took a different path from him, he eventually got back to Karl after fulfilling his curiosity in the other path. They continue their journey together until Edward found Karl a job and a home in a circus (August, 2003: 55). Edward also showed his loyalty towards an old friend Norther Winslow, even if
he had to help him breaking the law by robbing a bank (August, 2003: 89). He valued his friendships above everything.

Edward’s loyalty towards Sandra was visible ever since the day he saw her in the circus to the day he died. After he met her, not once did he wanders off from his determination in meeting and living with her. He put her in his priority ever since. Even after he finally managed to live with Sandra and have Will, his loyalty never lessened. In the final tales, a girl named Jenny Hill tried to kiss him and Edward politely refused her (August, 2003:104). She’s an old friend from Spectre, but Edward knew his priority, he put his family first in everything: family over friends, and friends over everyone else.

The virtue of loyalty is important to have. It is needed and essential for friendship, for interacting with all those other people successfully.

5. Wisdom

Wisdom is the virtue that is always counted in almost every list of virtues; Confucian virtue, Buddhist virtue, Socrates and Plato’s cardinal virtues, and also the seven virtues in Christian philosophy. According to Aristotle it is a virtue that are cultivated through growth and experience.

The way Edward thought since his young age was a sign of the virtue of wisdom. His dealing with the Old Woman, he wanted to see his end of life to deal with whatever comes before, was the seed of the wisdom he would soon have. His unusual way of thinking made something fearful as the base of his strength in the future was a good superiority compared to the other kids. His curiosity made him
have the idea of keeping up with his friends through series of encyclopaedia while he was stuck in bed for three years.

Edward was clever to confront the giant to eat him, before the giant could do anything harmful to him. The way he used his words somehow prevent the giant from willing to do anything to him and then he could reason with the giant.

In one of his assignment in military, he was sent to China. Getting ahead of the other soldier, he used his time to study the language (August, 2003: 72). His one-step-ahead way of thinking was always one of the signature traits of Edward. The knowledge brought him out of difficult situation through the help of the local entertainer in China.

In the tales where Edward was helping his friend Norther rob a bank, we knew that he was an inspiring man for making Norther leave Spectre. And while they were escaping, he shared with Norther everything he knew about the economic situation (August, 2003: 89-90). The economic understanding gained from Edward brought Norther became a successful businessman. The knowledge Edward had was the sign that he was full of knowledge that not everybody had.

Edward was not wealthy but he knew that he had made other people wealthy. He used this “wealth” to support him in helping his other friends that were not capable of defending their hometown from demolition.

6. Endurance

Edward was all about great determination on everything he was doing. In his younger years, he was a very determined boy. He was setting himself to be the biggest thing in his town through the achievement in many aspects. After he left
the town, that he thought was too small for a man of his ambition, he went through a path that was so full of difficulty and obstacles. With his determination, he went through it and successfully made his way out of there.

The Circus tale was the best evidence that Edward was a determined and hardworking person. He worked his way to meet Sandra through the three years he spent collecting the information from the ringmaster, Amos Calloway. His determination was also seen in the tales where he was finally meet Sandra and was pursuing her to marry him.

His effort in saving a town also showed us his determination in buying the land and property one by one, as an order to purchase the town as a whole. When he met an obstacle in buying the land and the house from Jenny, he did not give up and still trying to soften her by fixing her house.

The virtue of endurance is the virtue of Teutonic people, included in the eight virtues relevant to nobility of character (Roth, 1995: 913). It is the virtue that belongs to the people that have the ability to go through many obstacles in their live and usually come out even stronger than before.

7. Love

His love for Sandra was the only strength that he had in enduring the hard works in the circus. He fell in love at the first sight and he pursued the love to the point of sacrificing his time and energy for three years. The way he pursued Sandra in her college was also the part of his loving traits.

Love is affective; it involves feelings of closeness, tenderness, and passion. Love is behavioural; it has to do with how one person acts and intends to
act toward another, love is cognitive; it involves knowing another, wishing for and thinking of another’s best. Love is considered to be preeminent over faith and hope, it is considered the greatest of the seven virtues (Roth, 1995: 914).

The virtues explained above are the proof that Edward was a virtuous character and from the lack of vice in his characterization, we can say that Edward was purposely made himself the hero of the story and that he was indeed making his virtuous self a good figure example for his son. From the theory of story, it already explained that people tend to wish themselves become much more like their hero in their favorite story. By making the role model virtuous, Edward hope that his son will also be a virtuous person and get the good effect of becoming a virtuous person like what his character got in the tales.
CHAPTER V
CONCLUSION

This story about storytelling was a story full of lies and fabrications in the form of tall tales. In the tales, the storyteller, Edward Bloom was characterized as a courageous, determined, hard-working, smart, sincere, helpful, emphatic, faithful, loving, and socially charming person. In the tall tales, there were almost no bad characteristics of him. For a person to have such characteristics was of course a form of fabrication. However, there were proofs in the end of the story that made the tales were both right and wrong and for that reason, it is better to set aside the truthfulness behind the story and focusing more on the story itself.

It is common for somebody to tell his life story, if not based on his memory, based on the story he can live with. It would be a false and wrong story if we see it from Will’s point of view, but for Edward, it is what defined his life. Their conflict arose mostly because Will insisted that Edward did the right thing by telling the truth instead of the lies Edward insisted as the good thing through the tall tales. Again, we will set aside the argument of who is right or wrong, Will or Edward, and move forward to the method Edward use in telling his story.

He told his story, making himself the hero of his own epics. He described himself as young, attractive, handsome and smart in general, and imposing his characteristics as if he is a flawless hero of a cruel world. It was obvious that he was making himself a protagonist of a fiction. As we already know, fiction is the most effective way to influence people and most of them are carrying moralistic
messages within it. In the simplest way of saying, through the protagonist in the tall tales, Edward was trying to make himself a good example for everybody, especially his son Will.

From the characteristics presented in the tall tales, the researcher was able to make a list of virtuous traits out of them. The courageous trait is representing the virtue of courage. The sincere, emphatic, and helpful natures of him are the representative of the virtue of sincerity. His persuasive and socially charming traits are the virtue of sociality. The faithful traits he showed towards Sandra and his friends are the virtue of loyalty. The virtue of wisdom is taken from his smart and inspiring characteristics. The hardworking, passionate, and determined traits are the virtues of endurance. And his loving nature was the representative of the greatest virtue of all, the virtue of love. From the list of virtue that was taken from Edward’s characteristics in the tall tales, it can be concluded that Edward Bloom in the tales was a virtuous character.

With a virtuous character as the protagonist of the stories, and the nature of fiction the tall tales carry, we can draw a conclusion that Edward is influencing the listener to be a virtuous person. A virtuous person has many great advantages in life, the quality he/she has leads to harmony, contentment, and a successful human being. A virtuous life may lead a happy life because virtues have a close connection with human’s happiness. A virtuous person has a strong mind and did anything based on his own moral-consideration, not affected by external factor like fear of punishment or reward. In general, virtuous people have a well-developed moral character and that is a good thing to have. The moral values of
the tall tales are simply to drive the listeners into being virtuous. The whole purpose of the story was to make a good person out of the process of storytelling.

Being a virtuous person is not an easy process, it takes a lifelong process. The seed of virtues should be cultivated as early as possible. Here, it is the parent’s part in guiding their children with moral education, where Edward was trying to make himself a good father for Will. Without them knowing, both of them underwent a process of moral education long since Will was only a little boy. Someone who is exposed to a work of fiction tends to be more just and is higher in morality than those who do not. Edward was shaping Will to be a good person in general. And in the end, Will finally understood and felt the good influence behind his Edward’s storytelling.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


