

GABRIELE MUCCINO’S “THE PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS” AND ARISTOTLE’S DEFINITION OF “HAPPINESS”: A CRITICAL COMPARISON

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This study examines the very nature and meaning of “happiness” and attempts to discover whether an individual can achieve happiness in its truest sense. This research compares Aristotle’s definition of happiness in the *Nicomachean Ethics*, with that of the movie, *The Pursuit of Happiness*. In doing so, it establishes the guidance propounded by both in one’s achievement of happiness as an intrinsic condition of human life sought by most. According to Aristotle, happiness should be complete and sufficient as something good for the human being. This means that one must wish it for its own sake and own sake only, and therefore, something consistent. This according to Aristotle is the true nature of happiness or *eudaimonia*. He further states that the ultimate end of all human action is to seek happiness as means to an end. But the very transient and relative nature of the state of happiness make it the hardest to achieve. This study analyses the movie in all its aspects from plot, narrative to characterization, in relation to the theories of Aristotle, and attempts to identify what constitutes, if any, the true state of ‘happiness’. The story arc of *The Pursuit of Happiness* provides a great example as to how one can define happiness or at least aid us in identifying, what is real happiness. Chris Gardner, the protagonist of the movie, shows us how to look for true happiness amidst many hardships that one has to face in this life. And with a strong will and dedication one can find its true meaning. Furthermore, this research also examines multiple definitions of happiness that exist in many fields to establish its characteristics so that a common definition may be deduced. Apart from presenting these it also defines its function in “real life”.

Keywords: Eudaimonia, Nicomachean Ethics, The Pursuit of Happiness