



**Illusory Happiness Conditions in Killmondays  
Games's *Little Misfortune***

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**Abstract**

The pursuit of happiness is no simple feat. Haybron states people may find it challenging to pinpoint the factors that genuinely contribute to their happiness. Illusory happiness refers to an experience in which the individual perceives happiness in a manner that deviates from the properties supposedly associated with happiness. The illusory experience applied based on Craig's definition of illusion. The story of *Little Misfortune* by Killmondays Games represents Misfortune in pursuit of happiness, however, it is grounded in illusion. Eternal happiness that Mr. Voice compromises presents his game as a means to achieve happiness, but as the story unfolds, it becomes clear that this happiness is illusory, leading Misfortune to confront the true nature of her journey. What are the conditions of Misfortune faced by illusory happiness? By using the qualitative method, the thesis writer explores happiness perceptions centered around illusory happiness within the context of an interactive story of *Little Misfortune*. Misfortune's journey shows that illusory happiness gives temporal pleasures over sustained well-being and genuine fulfillment and misassessment value judgment.

Keywords: Craig; Haybron; Illusory Happiness; Killmondays Games; *Little Misfortune*

**A. INTRODUCTION**

According to Haybron (2008), the pursuit of happiness is a challenging endeavor, as individuals may struggle to identify the true sources of their contentment. Haybron suggests that well-being encompasses intricate dimensions that defy simple explanations, underscoring the complexity inherent in our quest for genuine fulfillment. Illusory happiness is described by Karl Max in *Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy* that religion provides a form of happiness for the people, but he labels it as illusory. In other words, he suggests that the comfort or contentment derived from religious beliefs is not based on a true or objective understanding of reality. Illusory Happiness not only in religion matters but also in everyday problems. For a scenario, a person seeks validation on social media, garnering likes and positive comments to boost their self-esteem and create a facade of happiness. However, this happiness is temporal and misinterpretation as the person may be grappling with personal challenges or dissatisfaction in reality. Based on Haybron's Happiness as well being and Craig's illusion theory, this leads to illusory happiness definition for this paper analysis.

Illusory happiness refers to an experience in which the individual perceives happiness in a manner that deviates from the properties supposedly associated with happiness. This concept involves happiness as the ordinary object of the experience. The happiness's properties applied based on Haybron's definition of happiness(2020): Then, the illusory experience applied based on Crane, Tim, and Craig French's definition of illusion(2021): an experience where the subject perceives something in a way that deviates from the properties of the ordinary object supposedly being perceived. With the definitions mentioned above, the thesis writer explores the concept of illusory happiness. Illusory happiness refers to an experience in which the individual perceives happiness in a manner that deviates from the properties supposedly associated with happiness(Haybron, 2020; Crane, 2021). This concept involves happiness as the ordinary object of the experience. The happiness's properties applied are based on Haybron's definition of happiness. Then, the illusory experience applied based on Craig's definition of illusion.

Little Misfortune by Killmonday Games is an interactive narrative adventure categorized within the realms of Adventure, Casual, and Indie gaming. It has been labeled with tags such as Point & Click, Psychological Horror, Adventure, Story Rich, Indie, Choices Matter, Horror, and Cute, indicating its wide-ranging appeal and genre diversity. Regarding its Steam reviews, Little Misfortune has received a highly favorable response, accumulating 7,190 reviews between September 18, 2019, and November 4, 2023. Additionally, the game offers an inclusive interface and includes subtitles in English, French, German, Spanish, Spanish (Spain), Portuguese (Brazil), Japanese, and Russian, appealing to diverse players worldwide. The story starts with Misfortune, an eight-year-old girl who does not have a wonderful family invited to play a game of Eternal Happiness by a mysterious voice named 'Mr. Voice'. Misfortune accepts the game and goes through the journey of misfortune to gain Eternal Happiness. Near the end of the game, she finds out that Eternal Happiness is a lie and there are many clues on how Eternal Happiness correlated with illusory happiness.

## **B. RESERACH METHOD**

Through the qualitative method, the paper relied on textual and visual data, involved unique steps in data analysis, and integrated diverse research design. The data gather multiple forms of data, such as interviews, observations, documents, and audiovisual information than relying on a single data source. (Creswell, 2014). The data be taken from LITTLE MISFORTUNE Full Game

Walkthrough - No Commentary (#LittleMisfortune Full Gameplay) 2019 by RabidRetrospectGames. The game Little Misfortune made by Killmondays that released on September 18, 2019. The gameplay made on September 19, 2019 at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RYwra8aymMU&t=448s>. The main focus of this study is the protagonist in the video game, Misfortune, and identifies her illusory happiness conditions. The data analysis includes attaining sources, reading the data carefully, comparing with other issues, quoting into paper, and writing down reference lists.

## **C. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS**

### **1. Immediate gratification or temporary pleasures over sustained well-being and genuine fulfillment**

Illusory happiness occurs when individuals perceive short-term gratification or temporary pleasures as positive for their overall well-being, neglecting the importance of activities or goals contributing to long-term fulfillment. Prioritizing immediate satisfaction over sustained happiness can lead to a fleeting sense of well-being that ultimately proves unsatisfying. In the journey towards Eternal Happiness, Misfortune encounters numerous unfortunate events that prompt her to prioritize temporary pleasures over genuine fulfillment, thus experiencing illusory happiness instead of the lasting contentment she seeks.

The first temporal pleasure is when Misfortune encounters a puppy. She put aside her journey to Eternal Happiness by deciding to play with the puppy, wanting to have some fun. Mr. Voice offers her a ball to throw and play with it. Misfortune threw the ball and it hit the tree behind it instead, leading a tree branch to fall into the puppy. Misfortune feels bad that she made the puppy 'broke'. This shows that her choice to play the puppy gives her backward of what she supposed she expected.

Misfortune	: "Puppy! What did I do? It's all broken now.. Mr. Voice? Everything I touch breaks, what's wrong with me?"
Mr. Voice	: "There's nothing wrong with you, sometimes life is just unfair. But I'm here for you."
Misfortune	: "Really? Thank you."(Little Misfortune, 00:18:43 - 00:20:21)

The second temporal pleasure is when Misfortune visits George's house to tell the news

of his puppy and the party that happened. She puts aside her journey to Eternal Happiness by her decision to visit George's house to enjoy the party, even though the first intention is to tell George about his puppy before going back to her journey to Eternal Happiness. She arrives at George's house and knocks on the door, but no one responds. Misfortune decides to invite herself into the house and is excited about the party. But Misfortune finds out that George is suicide and there is no party happening in the house. Misfortune feels disappointed about the matter but moves on after she tells the news of George's dead body. This shows that Misfortune's choice to visit George's house for the party is not what she is supposedly to expect.

Misfortune : "Excuse me, are you George? Are you the owner of a puppy, because I bring really bad news.."

Mr. Voice : "Oh no, wait! It looks like he hung himself."

Misfortune : "Hanged himself, like a pinata? Should I hit him like a pinata?"

Mr. Voice : "No, Misfortune. He's dead."

Misfortune : "Dead? But he's wearing a pair of sweet boots, he cant' be dead!"

(Misfortune finally notice that George is dead)

Misfortune: "Oh, ok..."(Little Misfortune, 00:25:10-00:27:11)

The third temporal pleasure is when Misfortune decides to eat the mints that she found neat at the hamster's party. She put aside her journey to Eternal Happiness by her decision to eat the mints without any knowledge that is it a drug pill. At first, she feels nice after eating it, but she slowly hallucinates and has a negative experience. She hallucinates that she is surrounded by rainbows and good things until crows appear and bad things. After that hallucination, Misfortune did not feel good as she claimed it is not a mint refreshment. This shows that Misfortune's choice to eat the 'mints' leads to a negative experience for her.

Misfortune : "Whoa, that wasn't a minty refreshment at all."

Mr. Voice : "Are you alright, Misfortune?"

Misfortune : "I'm ok.."(Little Misfortune, 00:33:13 - 00:34:25)

The fourth temporal pleasure is when Misfortune finds out that her Eternal Happiness is stolen by Benjamin. After she digs the grave where Mr. Voice hides Eternal Happiness, she finds out that the box that is supposed to contain Eternal Happiness is gone. The box only contains a note that Benjamin stole the Eternal Happiness. Misfortune once again feels disappointed about it and Mr. Voice tells Misfortune to take back her Eternal Happiness from Benjamin.

(Misfortune open the box., there is a note)

Misfortune : "Is this the prize? But, there's only a note."

Mr. Voice : "What?!"

Misfortune : “Yes. It says “I stole your Eternal Happiness. Signed, Benjamin.”  
He didn’t! My Eternal Happiness...”  
Mr. Voice : “I knew the fox was trouble! He stole your prize!”  
Misfortune : “What a disappointment.. I really wanted to surprise Mommy  
with this.. (Little Misfortune, 00:55:00 - 00:56:03)

But Misfortune failed to retrieve the stolen Eternal Happiness after she tried to confront Benjamin. She is passed out and placed back in the city. As Misfortune awakes, Mr. Voice tells her that Benjamin has attacked her. Misfortune once again feels disappointed about Benjamin’s doings and trusts Mr. Voice more. This shows that Misfortune's choice to reach Eternal Happiness is slowed down because of Benjamin's involvement.

Mr. Voice : “Misfortune! You’re alive and well, that’s great!”  
Misfortune : “Yeah, where am I? What happened?”  
Mr. Voice : “The dangerous fox attacked you!”  
Misfortune : “Benjamin attacked me? So he really is a bad fox!”  
Mr. Voice : “See? I told you, that fox Is evil!”  
Misfortune : “Yeah, maybe I should listen to you.” (*Little Misfortune*, 01:00:40 - 01:01:32)

The fifth temporal pleasure is when Misfortune visits Phastamargoria to get the boat to go to Benjamin’s location. Misfortune feels excited because she wants to visit the horror festival and hopes that she gets a ticket for a ride. Suddenly, a ticket appear after Mr. Voice says there is something in front of him. Misfortune found out that there was a ticket right in front of her. Misfortune feels excited and intrigued by the findings.

Misfortune : “What!? A ticket, for reals? Sweet, and spooky! Thank you.”  
Mr. Voice : “You’re welcome, Misfortune. Now let’s go find the boat to the  
fox, remember?”  
Misfortune : “Mmmhmm.” (*Little Misfortune*, 01:32:49 - 01:32:58)

Misfortune decides to use it on the ride to the haunted house. On the ride, Misfortune is distressed as she experiences fear and nausea during a fast-paced ride. As the ride concludes, she expresses her discomfort to Mr. Voice, mentioning her dizziness and the ride's speed. This shows that Misfortune's choice to ride the haunted house brings temporal pleasure to her.

Misfortune : “I don’t feel so good.. I’m feeling dizzy.”  
Mr. Voice : “You think you’re going to puke?”  
Misfortune : “I don’t want to, but the ride went too fast... It was fun..” (*Little Misfortune*, 01:37:26 - 01:38:45)

The sixth temporal pleasure is when Misfortune wanted to eat candy on Phantasmagoria. She did not have any money and she decided to eat the candy on the ground. She uses a party hat to gather the candy and eat it. The mixed candy also contains cigarettes and drugs, leading to another hallucination. She hallucinates that she is in a situation where she is at the dinner table with her

mommy and daddy. It shows her views that her parents did not go well together as Misfortune feels sadness and fear. As Misfortune is conscious, she feels that her heart is hurt and finally knows the 'candy' feels bad. This shows that Misfortune chose to want to eat candy to gain happiness, but did not have a good result after she ate the candy as a temporal pleasure.

Misfortune : "Ah, my heart hurts.."  
 Mr. Voice : "What is it, Misfortune?"  
 Misfortune : "I don't know.. I think the candy made me feel bad."  
 Mr. Voice : "Well, I told you not to eat it."  
 Misfortune : "Yeah, that's true.. Silly me. (*Little Misfortune*, 01:35:15 – 01:36:52)

The seventh temporal pleasure is when Misfortune finds out that her Eternal Happiness is a lie. As Misfortune reaches Benjamin's location, she gets told to hide by Mr. Voice. As she tried to walk, her foot got stuck in the tree roots. Misfortune tried to free herself, but she saw the monster that she saw when she tried to cross the road from her house. But she finally escaped and ran away. Mr. Voice appears and wonder why she running away. Mr. Voice thought it was the fox, Benjamin, yet Misfortune claimed that it was the monster.

Mr. Voice : "Whoa, whoa, whoa, Misfortune! Slow down! What are you running away from? Is it the fox? I'm pretty sure it was the fox."  
 Misfortune : "No, it's the monster! I saw it again!"  
 Mr. Voice : "You don't know what you're talking about."  
 Misfortune : "Yes, I do! I saw it." (*Little Misfortune*, 01:52:29 - 01:54:09)

After Misfortune inside Benjamin's cabin, she looks through Benjamin's stuff. As she finally meets Benjamin, she tries to comfort him about her stolen Eternal Happiness, she even wants to share it with him. But Benjamin has a reason why he stole Eternal Happiness. He shows his diary to her. Benjamin aims to save the missing victims from Morgo, the monster that chasing Misfortune since the beginning she plays Mr. Voice's game. Morgo communicates through voice, which leads to Mr. Voice being Morgo.

"Feeling no stomach aches, only gas. I go help missing victims in town. Morgo know I'm here. Morgo play old tryk trick many times now. But I make mistake! One victim can hear its voice inside her head. Victim code "MISFORTUNE". Is nice code. Morgo can't have her say boss. She must be rescued. But I follow steps. I saw Morgo take shape, scary."  
 Misfortune: "Is it the monster in your diary you're afraid of? I think I saw him too.", (*Little Misfortune*, 02:06:22-02:06:58)

After she got out of Benjamin's cabin, she found that Benjamin was gone and only found his bag on the ground. Misfortune accused Mr. Voice about Benjamin's whereabouts and his game. Misfortune tells him that he is the one who takes the missing children and she is one of the

victims, believing that the Eternal Happiness that he promises is a lie. This shows that Misfortune experiences temporal pleasures over long-term happiness that she wanted.

Misfortune : “Mr. Voice... Please, stop playing games. You have lied to me all the time and that’s very sucky! I trusted you..”  
Mr. Voice : “What are you talking about?”  
Misfortune : “I read what Benjamin wrote in his diary. All of it! You’re the one taking the children! And I.. I’m not the hero of this game, right? I guess the Eternal Happiness was all a lie..” (*Little Misfortune*, 02:11:10 – 02:12:59)

After Misfortune knows the truth, she reflects on Benjamin's warnings of her stolen Eternal Happiness and her misfortune throughout her journey. She admits that she strongly desires Eternal Happiness, but she does not see the potential negative consequences of her choice to accept Mr. Voice's game. This shows that Misfortune realizes that there is a difference between her expectation of happiness, actual happiness, and Eternal Happiness, which is illusory happiness.

Misfortune : “Benjamin was warning me all the time.. But I couldn’t see it... I wanted that Eternal Happiness so bad. I’m a silly little lady, that’s what I am.” (*Little Misfortune*, 02:22:34-02:22:44)

But since she does not know Benjamin and her mommy's whereabouts, she has no choice but to accept Mr. Voice's game again, but she aims to find Benjamin and her mommy, no longer to ask about Eternal Happiness. She hopes that she will find them, even if it is by playing Mr. Voice’s game again.

Mr. Voice : “Good, good. Ready for a new game?”  
Misfortune : “If I play along, would you give me back Benjamin?”  
Mr. Voice : “I guess I will. But only if you truly commit to the game!”  
Misfortune : “Ok..”  
Mr. Voice : “Splendid.. You will love my new game!”(*Little Misfortune*, 02:23:45-02:25:22)

Misfortune also shows that she no longer complies with Mr. Voice’s game after she realizes that Mr.Voice just uses the same game for her and the same prize as well, Eternal Happiness. But after Mr.Voice brings up Benjamin waiting in her house hallway, Misfortune complies with his game.

Mr. Voice : “How about this.. What if the fox was waiting for you in the hallway?”  
Misfortune : “If the game is about Benjamin and you leaving me alone, I’ll play along.”  
Mr. Voice : “Sure, sure, I promise! You know the way.”(*Little Misfortune*,

02:25:26-02:26:20)

When Misfortune sees the similarities of things that happened, she decides not to trust Mr. Voice anymore since he broke the promise that the game she plays is the same game as the beginning of her Eternal Happiness game.

*(Misfortune stumble from the carpet and broke the vase.)*

Misfortune : "Oh no, not again! You promised it wouldn't be like last time."

Mr. Voice : "That was a beautiful example of cause and effect!"

Misfortune : "No, you lied to me. I don't want to play this game anymore."*(Little Misfortune, 02:27:30 - 02:27:48)*

The quotes provided suggest that Misfortune finds fleeting joy during her pursuit of Eternal Happiness. Instead of seeking true well-being, she indulges in temporary pleasures. By accepting Mr. Voice's offer, she hopes to achieve lasting happiness and enhance her overall well-being. However, as she encounters setbacks on her journey, her happiness remains short-lived. Even the promise of Eternal Happiness is deceptive, as Mr. Voice's intentions become clear. Misfortune's happiness is ultimately an illusion, as she becomes aware of the truth behind Eternal Happiness that she seeks.

## 2. Misassessment Value Judgement

Illusory happiness can occur when individuals believe they are assessing happiness based on their own judgment, but in reality, they are influenced by external factors. This can lead to a misalignment between their perceived and actual values of happiness and fulfillment. Often, societal or cultural norms dictate what is considered a "good" or "successful" life, without individuals critically examining if these align with their genuine desires. Consequently, people may find themselves pursuing superficial markers of success, rather than seeking deeper internal fulfillment and personal growth. On the path to everlasting joy, Misfortune encounters temporary joys that offer fleeting gratification but ultimately realizes that her happiness isn't truly derived from her own fulfillment. This realization stems from adopting her mother's beliefs about happiness, mistakenly assuming them to be her own.

When Misfortune is offered by Mr. Voice of the game to gain Eternal Happiness, she accepts the game and thinks that she can give Eternal Happiness to her mommy. Even she wanted Eternal Happiness, she also thought she wanted to give to her mommy instead.

Mr. Voice : "If you can reach the end of the game, I'll give you Eternal



Happiness..Deal?"  
Misfortune : "Eternal Happiness? I guess I could give that to my  
Mommy..Ok, it's a deal!"(*Little Misfortune*, 02:27:30 – 02:27:48)

In her diary, Misfortune wrote down that she wanted to feel how to feel, she wanted to understand her own emotions since she was being pressed by her mommy about her own emotion. She is being told to pretend to be happy even if she is sad by her mommy and fears that she will be angry if she does not comply. This shows that Misfortune's value on her happiness is suppressed by her mommy's orders.

"My dad lied to me again. Not going out to the park today. I made myself pretty but he doesn't care. I feel sad, I cried but told Mommy I'm ok. I'm afraid if I tell her I'm sad, she'll be angry. Sometimes I don't know how to feel.. Nobody is teaching me how to feel. I wish in school they'd teach us where feelings come from, but for reals. No fairytales!"(*Little Misfortune*, 00:04:49-00:05:06)

Misfortune also thinks that she is fine even though she has trouble with her own emotions and her well-being. When she 'broke the puppy, she said that she would play with the puppy if she had the same condition as the puppy, being broken. Broken in the quotations means damaged or not working properly and needs to be repaired.

Misfortune : "I'm sorry I broke you puppy, I really am.. Maybe we can play later, you know? When I'm broken too." (*Little Misfortune*, 00:19:52-00:20:21)

Misfortune also thinks that she is fine even though she has trouble with her own emotions and her well-being. When she 'broke the puppy, she said that she would play with the puppy if she had the same condition as the puppy, being broken. Broken in the quotations means damaged or not working properly and needs to be repaired.

"My dad lied to me again. Not going out to the park today. I made myself pretty but he doesn't care. I feel sad, I cried but told Mommy I'm ok. I'm afraid if I tell her I'm sad, she'll be angry. Sometimes I don't know how to feel.. Nobody is teaching me how to feel. I wish in school they'd teach us where feelings come from, but for reals. No fairytales!"(*Little Misfortune*, 00:04:49-00:05:06)

Misfortune also asks if any of the people reach the end of the game and get the Eternal Happiness to Mr. Voice. Mr. Voice assured that others have reached the end of the game and live happily ever after. Misfortune said that she cannot bring happiness to her mommy, even the sparkle she uses cannot help her a bit. This shows that Misfortune wanted to make her mommy happy rather than herself. She did not prioritize her happiness but rather her mommy's happiness.

Misfortune : "Has anyone reached the end of the game and gotten the Eternal Happiness?"

<b>Michelle, Rindrah</b>	<b>Illusory Happiness Conditions in Killmondays Games's Little Misfortune</b>
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Mr. Voice : "Yes, of course! They lived happily ever after!"  
Misfortune : "That sounds nice. You know? I want to win this prize for my Mommy. I wish I could give her some happiness.. My sparkle doesn't work with her." (*Little Misfortune*, 00:42:59-00:43:45)

When Misfortune goes back to reality after Benjamin defeats Mr. Voice, she sees that her mommy and a police officer are outside her house. Misfortune approaches her mommy. But despite Misfortune's attempts to get her attention, her mommy remains unresponsive. Her mommy looks like she crying while the police officer explaining to her mommy on something in front of her daddy's car. Misfortune did not know what was happening and thought that her mommy was angry at her because she failed to give her the Eternal Happiness. It shows that Misfortune prioritizes her mommy's happiness over her happiness.

Misfortune : "Mommy! I'm back! Mommy, don't ignore me! Are you angry because I couldn't get the happiness for you? (*Little Misfortune*, 02:33:02-02:33:28)

When Misfortune goes back to reality after Benjamin defeats Mr. Voice, she sees that her mommy and a police officer are outside her house. Misfortune approaches her mommy. But despite Misfortune's attempts to get her attention, her mommy remains unresponsive. Her mommy looks like she crying while the police officer explaining to her mommy on something in front of her daddy's car. Misfortune did not know what was happening and thought that her mommy was angry at her because she failed to give her the Eternal Happiness. It shows that Misfortune prioritizes her mommy's happiness over her happiness. In the end, Misfortune is no longer alive and decides to follow Benjamin. She did not deny Benjamin's words, but she wanted to talk to her mommy before she went. Misfortune told her mommy that she going somewhere else with Benjamin, someone she liked and trusted. She also admits that she is her misfortune while she is still alive, Misfortune requests her mommy hoping and encouraging her to find her happiness, expressing she will love her before she leaves with Benjamin.

Misfortune : "Mommy.. I'm going to go somewhere else. With Benji. Ok? He's the fox that I like. I'm a little lady, you know? That's what I am. I guess I was your little misfortune for a while.. But you need to find you own happiness now. I'll love you forever..." (*Little Misfortune*, 02:33:02 - 02:33:28)

The quotation suggest that Misfortune mistakenly perceives happiness in her pursuit of Eternal Happiness due to a discrepancy between her own happiness standards and those of her mother. Misfortune's misunderstanding of her mother's happiness standards arises from the fact

that each individual holds unique values regarding happiness. Misfortune and her mother have divergent definitions of happiness, resulting in unfulfilled expectations for both parties. Consequently, Misfortune's pursuit of Eternal Happiness appears superficial because it does not align with her intrinsic values.

#### **D. CONCLUSION**

From the discussion above, Misfortune's illusory happiness conditions are different from the actual happiness itself. Misfortune's illusory happiness gave her temporal pleasures over sustained well-being and genuine fulfillment that she wanted to perceive. She experiences misfortunes and finds out that Eternal Happiness is a lie showing the result of her illusory happiness. Misfortune experiences make her misassessment her own value judgment on happiness and not realize that she holds her mommy's value judgment on happiness.

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