

HEDONISM IN KEVIN KWAN'S "*CRAZY RICH ASIANS*"

MUHAMMAD LUTFI OBBI KUSUMA

WINDA SETIASARI

ABSTRACT

This thesis deals with the hedonism in '*Crazy Rich Asians*' novel by Kevin Kwan. The objectives are to find out the hedonism values and the influence of hedonism from the main character of the novel, which the writer wants to convey to the readers. The study was conducted by applying qualitative research. Data that uses this study are primary data: the data were reached from the '*Crazy Rich Asians*' novel. Then, secondary data were reached from literature review, and other sources information that related to object of this research. The technique for collecting the data was documentary technique. After analyzing the novel, it was found six of hedonism values, they are: (1). Materialism 5 cases, (2). Consumerism 10 cases, (3). Egoism 4 cases, (4). Individualism 2 cases, (5). Uncontrolled Lifestyle 10 cases, (6). Irresponsibility 3 cases. The influence of hedonism can be seen by the main character descriptions with the cases of a narration and dialogues, the writer concludes some influence of hedonism that have a bad behaviour and personalities to the readers they are. (1). Alcoholics drinks and party becomes a part of new lifestyle, (2). The concept of free love custom for teenagers (3). Earn the money to get a statisfication, (4). Wastes the time by doing unimportant things. The last the reason hedonism portrayed by the main character are found from their own surroundings such as a friends, social condition or environments, even it comes from themselves.

Keywords: Hedonism, Hedonism Values, Novel, Crazy Rich Asians.

INTRODUCTION

Literature as a human creation that has characteristic, original, and is written in beautiful words to give some knowledge about social, humanity and intellectual. Literature is defined as writing in which expression and form, in connection with ideal of permanent and universal interest. This statement asserts that literary work is a product of human thought. As result of permanent ideas and universal, literature can be comfortably enjoyed by any people in different ages. Literature may happen in the real life. It is not just a collection of real events or just a document of fact.

On the other hand literary work is an aesthetics written to tell the readers to comprehend the values of a creation and intended the suggestion value from the author to the readers. This statement was supported by the opinion of Klarer, (2004) said that literary works or fictions are written by the author to offer an ideal lifestyle and there is value application in the attitude, behavior of the character of human being. It is also applied authority and human prestige. The author creates the literary works is not only using the skill and creation ability at all, but also based on the vision, inspiration and struggle.

Every human being lives with their own views and ideologies. And they show what they believe through the attitudes and lifestyle they live. One of the ideologies that are widely developed in society is hedonism. For the wider community, hedonism itself is often associated with being extravagant, like to waste money, and only thinking about the happiness of the world. Increasingly modern life makes humans very enthusiastic about the existence of things new so that a lifestyle is created hedonism as a form of expression yourself to compete in pursuit of physical modernity, want to be attractive attention by looking fashionable and trendy so as not to look stodgy.

People who have a lifestyle like this are influenced by a lot of factors, namely internal factors and external. Internal factors include attitudes, experiences, observations, personality, and self-concept. Attitude is defined as a perspective and tendency to act. Experience is obtained from the results of human interaction with the environment. A person's observations are influenced by the results of the five senses and understood through the identification process. Personality is a structure of individual characteristics

and ways of behaving that determine differences in the behavior of each individual. Meanwhile, self-concept plays a role in self-regulation to be able to respond to any stimulus from outside. External factors that affect the hedonic lifestyle are the reference group, family, social class, and culture. Reference groups are groups that give influence directly or indirectly to a person's attitude and behavior. Individual interactions with reference groups can influence the individual's hedonic behavior.

According to Chaney (in Praja and Damayantie, 2013) a hedonistic lifestyle is a lifestyle whose activities are to seek the pleasures of life, such as more spend a lot of time outdoors, play more, enjoy being in a city crowd, happy to buy expensive things that he likes, and always want to be the center of attention. According to the Collins Gem dictionary (in Praja and Damayantie, 2013) stated that “Hedonism is a stated doctrine that pleasure is the most important thing in life, or hedonism is the notion held by those who seek the pleasures of life solely”.

Flocker, (2004:16) in the *Hedonism Handbook* says, “Hedonism is considered a lifestyle in which pleasure and happiness are the ultimate goals in life. A hedonist is one who seeks pleasure and avoids pain above all else.” From these definitions, we can say that hedonism deals with individual or society way of life which pleasure plays an important role for them.

The hedonistic lifestyle is a temporary lifestyle that is widely followed by many people adolescents (Veenhoven, 2003). A hedonic lifestyle can lead adolescents into behavior negativity, such as skipping school, violating regulations, destroying infrastructure (vandalism), smoking, consumption of alcoholic drinks, to violations of the law such as the use of narcotics, free sex, and other criminal acts that can lead to the moral destruction of adolescents (Purwanti, 2015). Veenhoven (2003) states that a hedonic lifestyle becomes a thing social concern because of the hedonic behavior expressed by pursuing a lifestyle luxury and pleasure-seeking behavior causes the individual to become insensitive towards the surrounding environment, and can lead to a decrease in moral values. Naomi's research and Mayasari (2008) also explained that a hedonic lifestyle can have an impact indirectly against the emergence of criminal acts such as theft, corruption, and others.

a. Hedonism Values

An important distinction among kinds of value is the distinction between something's being good for some person (or another subject), and something's simply being a good thing. The former kind of value called 'welfare' or 'well-being' make our lives better, or makes things go better for us, while the latter kind of value makes the world better. Typically, whenever a person receives some benefit or has his life made better, this also makes the world better. Many things that we commonly describe as good are good merely instrumentally, or good for what they bring about, or prevent. Brax, (2009:75) states that hedonism holds of pleasure are intrinsically good and states of pain intrinsically bad, whether for their subjects or impersonally as well.

The impact of the hedonistic behavior of a person who has fallen into this hedonistic lifestyle, among others, are: (1) individualism, which is an understanding that considers human beings personally to be considered (abilities and needs should not be equalized); (2) materialistic, is a part of hedonism, where they feel dissatisfied with what they already have, and are always jealous when they see other people; (3) uncontrolled lifestyle, followers of hedonism can be trapped in promiscuity where they are always in the night world such as clubbing, drug parties, and free sex; (4) consumptive in the form of hedonism tends to be consumptive, because it spends money on buying goods for the sake of pleasure without realizing the need; (5) selfish, more selfish and personal pleasures and does not care about the people around them (6) is not responsible, becomes an individual who wastes time and is concerned with pleasure only.

b. Crazy Rich Asians Novel

Crazy Rich Asians is a satirical 2013 romantic comedy novel by Kevin Kwan. Kwan stated that his intention in writing the novel was to "introduce a contemporary Asia to a North American audience". He claimed the novel was loosely based on his own childhood in Singapore. The novel became a bestseller and was followed by two sequels, *China Rich Girlfriend* in 2015 and *Rich People Problems* in 2017. A film adaptation of the novel was released on August 15, 2018.

A novel by Kevin Kwan, it is "*Crazy Rich Asians*" which is written by Kevin Kwan and has some achievements. This novel was a good story because Kwan's made the story with a background of modern lifestyle. '*Crazy Rich Asian*' novel begins with one of the character meeting each other and having a relationship. Packages with a modern setting lifestyle, so many intricate and conflict found in this novel. One of the lifestyles that we can find is hedonism in the novel. Brax (2009:199) states that

hedonism about the good says that pleasure is the only thing that is good in itself. Hedonism is known and has a big impact on society. The influence of cultural hedonism highly immersive seen in '*Crazy Rich Asian*'. When the characters of the novel living in a globalization era and an identity crisis about good and bad, or right or wrong seemed stimulated by the influence of hedonism.

These habits also affect the moral values of the society that cannot be separated from our life. The point of the influences of hedonism to the readers is having bad personalities and behavior. From the data the writer also might say that the influences of hedonism can be seen by the descriptions of the main characters with the cases of narration and dialogue that imitates the real condition of having hedonistic behavior.

The objective of this study is to describe the values of hedonism delivered by the main character in '*Crazy Rich Asian*' novel. Based on the results of the preliminary study, it can be seen that the hedonistic behavior shown by the characters in the *Crazy Rich Asians* novel contains certain values. Thus, the researcher is interested in studying what the values of the Hedonist Lifestyle are shown by the characters in the novel *Crazy Rich Asians*.

METHODOLOGY

This study was conducted by employing qualitative research. Moleong (2007:6) states that qualitative research is conducted to understand the phenomena experienced by research subject, such as behaviour, perception, motivation, action, and so on. This study intended to describe the values and the influence of hedonism in the main character of '*Crazy Rich Asian*' novel by Kevin Kwan.

Wellek and Werren in *Theory of Literature* state that there are two approaches in analyzing the literary works, which called intrinsic and extrinsic approach. Intrinsic approach is a kind of approach which analyzes literary works based on the text and the structural points in the literary works itself, such as theme, plot, characters, setting, style, and point of view. While extrinsic approach focuses to analyze the relationship between the content and the other discipline of knowledge, such as history, sociology, psychology, biography, etc. In this thesis, I use the extrinsic approach by relating the data with the hedonism phenomena that happen in '*Crazy Rich Asian*' novel.

The subject of this research was primary data: the data were taken from the '*Crazy Rich Asian*' novel. Then, secondary data: the data were taken from literature review, and information that related to object of this research. The data analysis focused on the narration and dialogues of the main character. The conclusion was many values and influence of hedonism that actually hidden in '*Crazy Rich Asian*' novel.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The analysis of the topic was explored deeply through the example of the narration and dialouge from main character that have negative attitudes. The main purpose was to find the values of hedonism as pictured in people lives nowadays. Each of narration and dialogues from the novel represents every social condition. However, the writer has their own point of view to explain, interpreting and express their feeling to get the influence of hedonism itself and describes the reasons hedonism portrayed in the main character '*Crazy Rich Asians*' novel.

After analyzing the data of '*Crazy Rich Asians*' novel by applying hermeunetics theory, then there are some findings that can be found related to the values of hedonism. The findings are presented as followed:

1. Materialism
2. Consumerism
3. Egoism
4. Individualism
5. Uncontrolled Lifestyle
6. Irresponsibility

From the narration and dialogues of the main character, the writer interpreted the influence of hedonism that could be seen by the six values of hedonism above. It clearly shows from the story of '*Crazy Rich Asians*' the hedonism as a lifestyle, because they want to get more happiness without feeling pain, bad thing, and sadness. The main characters of the novel want to get the freedom to express the happy feeling although they have to break their attitude and rebel against the laws in society. They consider that they are doing the right way of getting pleasure even they always spend their money and

wasting all time they had. It means that the cases of hedonism in that story also describe the way people live because it takes from the habit of the people's lives today.

From the narrative and dialogue of the main character, the writer finds several cases of hedonistic values shown by the main characters in the novel *Crazy Rich Asians*. Can be seen in the Table below:

Values of Hedonism	
1. Materialism	5 cases
2. Consumerism	10 cases
3. Egoism	4 cases
4. Individulism	2 cases
5. Uncontrolled Lifestyle	10 cases
6. Irresponsibility	3 cases

From the data above, it can be concluded that the value of consumerism appears most in the novel *Crazy Rich Asians*. Consumptive behavior is a human tendency to do unlimited consumption. Consumptive is a symptom of something to do with the human desire for something, the desire to have or consume excessively to achieve satisfaction. Consumptive data in the crazy rich asian novel 10 data were found. Consumptive behavior is seen in the main character who often goes shopping to buy expensive things

In the second place, the value of uncontrolled lifestyle. This value is also found in the main characters by doing extraordinary things like sex, drinking alcohol, having parties just for fun, and smoking. Then materialism, Materialists are people who are oriented to matter or material things only. In Kevin Kwan's *Crazy Rich Asians* novel is found 5 materialistic data. Materialistic nature can be seen in the main characters who judge people as wealthy, more concerned with money and expensive items so he can be recognized in his environment, so he is willing to exchange himself with the material.

The egoism behaviour is the one who has an exaggerated self importance and who sometimes thinks that he/she is more important than anybody else. Egoistic behavior data in the *Crazy Rich Asians* novel by Kevin Kwan were 4 data were found. Egoism behaviour becomes a values of hedonism, because egoistic makes people doing a hedonism things and only focuses on her/his self. This behavior shows that hedonism

affects human nature to not care about others and be more concerned with their pleasures. An Egoism person thinks that she/he is extremely important than others that included their happiness.

Irresponsibility is the absence of caring, feeling obligation, bear and are not responsible in behaving, deeply committed, and in an abundance of trust. Data is not responsible in the novel *Crazy Rich Asians* by Kevin Kwan found as many 3 data. And the last is Individualism, individualism is a belief that follows personal freedom and prioritizes that freedom compared to others and considers human beings personally to be considered. Data The individualism in Kevin Kwan's novel *Crazy Rich Asians* is found in 2 data.

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

Having analyzed the data completely, it can be concluded that '*Crazy Rich Asians*' novel by Kevin Kwan illustrates the social phenomena of hedonism nowadays. From the analysis, there are six values of hedonism they are: (1).Materialism, (2).Consumerism, (3).Egoism, (4).Individualism, (5). Uncontrolled Lifestyle, (6).Irresponsibility. The main character was found from the cases of hedonism by reading a narration and dialogues of the novel it can be influenced by their own surroundings such as a friend, social condition or environments, even it comes from themselves. From the data the writer found 33 cases of hedonism they are: (1). Materialism 5 cases, (2). Consumerism 10 cases, (3). Egoism 4 cases, (4). Individualism 2 cases, (5). Uncontrolled Lifestyle 10 cases, (6). Irresponsibility 3 cases.

Referring to the results of the analysis, there are some suggestions as follows;

1. The students who have the same idea as the writer can develop this thesis to get more understanding about the hedonism itself. The English Literature students may study more about this problem because this thesis also reflects the real condition of the people today. The student must be able to understand the narration and dialogues that indicate hedonism in this novel.
2. The lecturer can explain and improve learning about Hedonism and the way to analyze Hedonism, especially about a high sense of negative sides in

Hedonism, so all students are able to interpret the positive or negative of hedonism.

3. This study can be a reference for English Literature department student who wants to analyze the Hedonism lifestyle and also for the readers in enriching their knowledge who are interested in this kind of topic.

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