

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

There are five subchapters in this chapter. The subchapters cover the background of the study, statement of the research problems, objectives of the study, the significances of the study, scope and limitation of the study.

1.1 Background of The Study

Hedonism is one of the ideologies that can be said to be a view that is always developing in society. For ordinary people, believing hedonism is an act that is always dragged by a negative stigma leads to an understanding that hedonism is associated with extravagant things, wasting money, and purely always thinking about worldly pleasures. The word hedonism itself is taken from the Greek *hēdonismos* from the root word *hēdonē*, which means "pleasure". This understanding seeks to explain both what satisfies human desires and what increases the quantity of pleasure in human themselves. Meanwhile, in (Wehmeier et al., 2007) Hedonism is defined as the belief that pleasure should be the main aim in life. The meaning is believing for pleasure should be the main goal in life. In other words, according to Collins Gem (1993), the notion of Hedonism is a doctrine that states that pleasure is the most important thing in life.

Observing the hedonistic lifestyle that is increasingly prevalent where people are competing to display luxury and pleasure, such as wasting money without thinking. (Veenhoven, 2003) says that Hedonism is a way of life characterized by openness to pleasant experiences. In other words, hedonism is a philosophy that states that pleasure determines the good. Consequently, anything that increases the amount of pleasure is considered good, and conversely, anything that increases pain is wrong. This situation demands that those who uphold this ideology are always more eccentric than others. Where things like keeping up with the times are terrible, a person can fall into things that can make life feel meaningless or even be called a coward who just walks around aimlessly. Hedonism's view of life can make life shrouded in problems, but it does not only refer to bad things. This is due to the low

view of some people in addressing problems or what needs must be met first. This is supported by the characteristics of the main character in the novel "*Sex and Vanity*" by Kevin Kwan. This research was conducted because it is very minimal and, arguably, there is no literature that discusses hedonism in the novel "*Sex and Vanity*".

June 30, 2020, a full edition hedonism novel launched with 344 pages. *Sex and Vanity*, a Novel by Kevin Kwan, has many tendencies regarding ethnic construction. The representation of American-Chinese ethnic culture contained in the novel is well packaged with the ideology of hedonism shown by the main character named Lucie Tang Churchill. This novel from Penguin Random House Publisher is a perfect summer read. A modern romance novel that describes a lot about wealth, love, and identity with all the uniqueness that stands out, this novel looks interesting to be dissected in this research. The strong reason for choosing this novel as the key is the strong culture of hedonism contained in this novel, where it can affect the identity of the main character so that she experiences massive construction.

There are some previous studies which are related with the topic, no study has used the novel as the source of the study before. It is new novel and no one analyzes about it in literature field. However, there are only studies quite similar with the topic of adjustment. The first is entitled "*Hedonism as Reflected in Hemingway's The Snows of Kilimanjaro*" (2018) written by Vincentia Gita Yulis Setyaningrum and Samanik. Their study discusses hedonism in the short story *The Snows of Kilimanjaro* by Ernest Hemingway also uses hedonism from Weijer's theory as the main theory to analyze. In this study, one of the values of hedonism was found, namely materialism. Second, the thesis entitled "*Hedonism in Oscar Wilde's novel The Picture of Dorian Gray (1891): A Marxist Approach*" was written by Wiyanto (2020). This research is based on a literary concentration, namely the analysis of the hedonistic lifestyle in the novel *The Picture of Dorian Gray* by Oscar Wilde. The theory used as a reference is the theory of Marxism. The result of this analysis

is the discovery of several causal indicators regarding the issue of hedonism. The main character, Dorian Gray is exposed to hedonism as a result of being too innocent and lacking in self-principles to prevent harmful external influence exerted by his friend, Lord Henry Wotton. This is what causes Dorian to fall into a hedonistic lifestyle finally.

The third reference is "*The Portrayal of Hedonism in How to Sell By Clancy Martin*" by David Fanani (2022) This study also uses Weijer's theory of hedonism and finds four forms of hedonism in Bobby which is the main character. This research shows that a person's bad habits have a bad impact on the main character and others. Bad habits can also be passed on to the people around us and have a bad impact on their lives. The fourth reference is Rizky Aisyah Vianida (2018) with a thesis entitled "*Identity and Self-Concept: A Study about Hedonism of Being Youth In MAMA (2017) Music Video By Jonas Blue Featuring William Singe*", The finding of this study is success to create a new idea about reality, representation, and ideology to identify issues contained in music videos to find the meaning of interpretation analysis.

The last, "*The Construction of Identity of "Sultan" and Hedonism on TikTok @indrakenz*" by Diyah Ayu Karunianingsih, (2022). The results of the study show that the construction of the "sultan" identity and hedonism is carried out by writing the sultan's caption, hashtag #sultan, the word sultan spoken by Indra Kesuma, as well as activities Sultan's life was like buying a car, eating and wearing expensive clothes. *TikTok* has become a spectacle for the spread of ideology about role models and standards of living for teenagers, namely the hedonistic life of the sultan.

Based on several previous studies mentioned, no one has analyzed hedonism in "*Sex and Vanity*" as a data source, driven by the novel factor which is included in the new literary class. Therefore, the author took the initiative to elaborate something new in data sources that have not been fully explored with research that concentrates on literature based on cultural studies. The author classifies Lucie Hedonism with a Hedonism theory and supporting by Marxist approach, then the author analyzes the type of hedonism found in the main character in "*Sex and*

Vanity", secondly how the negative impact of Hedonism's influence on the main character. Lucie Tang Churchill is the key figure used to answer all research hypotheses.

1.2 Research Questions

Based on the background of the study above, there are two research questions, as follow:

1. What are the types of hedonism in Lucie Tang Churchill?
2. What are the negative impacts of the types of hedonism that appear on Lucie Tang Churchill?

1.3 Objectives of The Study

In line with the questions above, the purpose of this study is divided into two answers, those are:

1. To elaborate kinds of hedonism experienced by Lucie Tang Churchill.
2. To describe the negative impact of hedonism on the influence of hedonism that appears in Lucie Tang Churchill.

1.4 Significances of The Study

This study applies the hedonism theory explained by Daniel Michael Weijer (2012) supported by Marxism theory. Two significances are expected from this study:

1. Theoretically, this study can enrich the reader's understanding of hedonism and marxism and get to know more about the field of cultural study in the era of modernism.
2. Practically, this study is expected to be used as a reference for further research, especially in the English Study Program that raises the issue of hedonism literary works.

1.5 Scope and Limitation of The Study

In defining the scope of the research, this research focuses on the character of Lucie Tang Churchill in Kevin Kwan's *Sex and Vanity*. The writer talks about the hedonism behaviour experienced by Lucie Tang Churchill. Furthermore, this research is limited in answering research problems, namely the types of hedonism experienced by Lucie, also the negative impact of the types of hedonism identified on Lucie which are contained in Kevin Kwan's *Sex and Vanity*.