

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of the Studies

Pleasure, in which everyone has always tried to achieve within their life, is something that contains all our feelings of good or happy—includes the affective positivity of all joy, gladness, liking, and enjoyment (Katz, 2016). The fact that we might choose something because it brings us pleasure suggests that pleasure has qualities that make certain choices better than others. Philosophers have expanded on this idea, sometimes viewing pleasure as a simple aspect of experience that makes things more appealing when it is present. Further meaning, often referred to as "hedonism," links this basic idea, suggesting that pleasure (and avoiding pain) explains all human values, reasons for action, and motivations. If hedonism were true, pleasure and pain would be the only things that truly matter in life, guiding all of our actions and decisions.

Literally, the word hedonism is derived from Greek *ἡδονή* (*hēdonē*), which refers to theories about what is good for us, how we should behave, and what motivates our actions (Weijers, 2012). There is a lot of meaning and context to define hedonism; however, according to Ruut Veenhoven, hedonism is the term used to describe a way of life in which pleasure plays an important role (2003). Meanwhile, according to Ksendzova et al., hedonism is the theory that prioritizes pleasure over other life values (2015). Considering those definitions, there is a strong sense of relation between hedonism and pleasure because all that matters for

a hedonist is pleasure, whether it is physical or psychological. This relation between two terms generates another term, which is hedonistic pleasure. Hedonistic pleasure refers to the experience of pursuit of pleasure and avoidance of pain, which became the highest or most desirable goal of life and the key to a fulfilling life.

Hedonistic acts of pleasure of American teens in the early 2000s were mainly caused by the effect of mass media and popular culture of America, especially those that are promoting sexual material and consumerism (Buckingham & Bragg, 2004: 6). This phenomenon has led the attitudes of society, especially the teens and early adults, towards sexual content to become more permissive and normal, thus making them indulge in the course of sexual activity in search of pleasure. Another study also found that American teenagers during that era pay a lot more attention to what they wear and what they have in order to fit in within their norms and gain status in a group (Milner, 2004: 5). Due to the constantly changing norms, these teenagers lead the events of fast-changing trends in fashion, music, and language—hence promotes consumerism—and has been an important aspect of the popular culture in America because of its constant changes and development. With their different mindset and identity from adults, American youths have found numerous ways to express their ideas, beliefs, and interests in pursuit of their so-called ‘pleasure’. These acts of teenagers—hedonism, consumerism, and pursuit of pleasure—align perfectly with the phenomena that happen in the film, especially to the main character, Chrستine “Lady Bird” McPherson.

The film *Lady Bird* (2017), directed by Greta Gerwig, tells a story about a young woman named Chrstine “Lady Bird” McPherson (Saoirse Ronan), who experiences a series of events in her coming-of-age period. The film revolves around the main character facing her complex relationship between mother and daughter and also the financial issues of her family. Despite it all, she always tried to pursue even a little bit of pleasure and fulfil her dream to move out of her small rural town. Unhappy with the situation she is in, Lady Bird tried to join a musical theater club in her school, only to end up falling in love with a gentle and popular boy, Danny, but their relationship did not last long. She then tried to befriend popular kids in her school, whom everyone adores by following their bad behavior and lying about her own family's wealth, while leaving alone her best friend, Julie. Lady Bird measured everyone and everything around her with a delicate meter of money—money that her parents do not have. By everyone and everything, the writer means her social act, her desire for pleasure, her sense of freedom, and her relationship. In the film, the term ‘pleasure’ serves as a driving force for the main character, who seeks to break away from her rural-town environment and pursue a better life. Her search for pleasure and happiness leads her to explore new relationships and experiences that will help her problems later on.

These acts of hedonism driven by her desire for pleasure are what pique the interest of the writer because of how relatable they are to what actually happens in every teenager's life, especially American teenagers in the early 2000s. By analyzing the representation of hedonistic pleasure in American culture through the film within the lens of hedonism theory and American youth social culture as a

context, the writer aims to reach a deep understanding about the relations of individual desires, social expectation, and the pursuit of pleasure in contemporary American culture.

1.2. Research Questions

1. What are the analysis of character and characterization, conflict, and setting analysis of the film *Lady Bird* (2017) by Greta Gerwig?
2. What types of hedonistic acts are done by the main character, Christine "Lady Bird" McPherson, in the film *Lady Bird* (2017) by Greta Gerwig?
3. Why does the main character of the film *Lady Bird* (2017) by Greta Gerwig commit hedonistic acts?

1.3.Objectives of the Studies

Based on the research questions above, the aims of this study are:

1. To analyze the character and characterization, conflict, and setting analysis of the film *Lady Bird* (2017) by Greta Gerwig.
2. To understand the types of hedonistic acts of the main character in the film *Lady Bird* (2017) by Greta Gerwig.
3. To comprehend the reasons why the main character of the film *Lady Bird* (2017) by Greta Gerwig commit hedonistic acts.

1.4.Scope of the Study

The scope of this study is to conduct a comprehensive analysis of the representation of hedonistic pleasure in American culture in the film within the lens

of hedonism theory and American youth social culture as a context. In this research, the writer will limit the analysis to focus on the main character of the film *Lady Bird* (2017) written and directed by Greta Gerwig. Produced by IAC Films and distributed by Universal Pictures, the filming of *Lady Bird* (2017) took place in August to November 2016 in California and New York. It premiered at 44th Telluride Film Festival on September 1, 2017, and was released theatrically in the United States on November 2, 2017.

Regarding the main character of the film *Lady Bird* (2017), the writer will closely examine every action, speech, and expression that represent the hedonistic pursuit of pleasure and whether they align with American youth social culture. In terms of intrinsic aspects, the writer will examine the character and characterization, conflict, setting, and the cinematography elements that greatly affect the main character in the film *Lady Bird* (2017). Meanwhile for the extrinsic aspects, the writer will primarily discuss hedonism, pursuit of pleasure, and the reasoning of the acts of hedonism done by the main character of the film *Lady Bird* (2017) by Greta Gerwig.

1.5.Previous Studies

In order to answer the research questions above and provide better understanding related to the topic and the object of this analysis, the writer has been searching for previous studies to help with this research.

To begin with, the thesis conducted by Salsabiela Aisya Wijaya (2021), with the title of *Sigmund Freud's Psychoanalysis and Defense Mechanism Theory as*

Reflected in Lady Bird (2017). Even though the topic is not related to the writer's topic, the context of the film provided by this thesis has been a great help to the writer in order to understand the struggle of the main character of the film, her social life, and her family problems. The analysis of the intrinsic aspects of this film also helps the writer to understand the plot, characterization, and setting that happened in the film better.

Right after, a review of the film *Lady Bird* (2017) written by Sheila O'Malley (2017) provides a better understanding regarding the context of social standing between the movie and the director. It also explains O'Malley's personal interpretation of some scenes in the film and the hidden meaning of every main character's action, which helps the writer to imagine and interpret the film into the writer's personal interpretation.

In turn, a journal article written by Muhammad Ridho & Tri Wahyu Retno Ningsih (2022), with the title of *Hedonism Practices as Reflected through the Main Character in the Wolf of Wall Street Movie*. With the topic that aligns perfectly, this article provides an adequate example of how the writer should analyze the film and its relations to the theory of hedonism and happiness by Weijers. This research used a descriptive qualitative method to analyze the data, while the data is taken from the main character dialogues in the film.

Furthermore, a journal article written by Ni Putu Khetrina Adi, Ni Ketut Widhiarcani, and Putu Lirishati Soethama (2022), with the title *Representation of Hedonism by the Characters in Gossip Girl Series 2021*. This article's purpose is to

analyze the types of hedonism and its effects on the characters in the series by using Weijers' and Veenhoven's theories. This article used a descriptive-qualitative approach to analyze the data. The data were collected from the series entitled *Gossip Girl* using the documentation method and note-taking technique.

After that, a journal article written by Adinda Maharani & Acep Iwan Saidi (2021), entitled *Visual Representation of Hedonism in 'Parasite Film'*. The purpose of this article is to determine the visual representations that relate to the hedonism perspective carried out by the lower-class character depicted in the film. This article used the descriptive qualitative method and Roland Barthes' semiotic theory in the analysis.

In addition to that, a journal article written by Aurelies Riani Mangetan, Dahlia D. Moelier, and Asrafunnisa (2021), with the title *Hedonism Portrayed in Tony Kushner's Play Script "Angels in America."* The aim of this article is to discover and explain the act of hedonism of the main character depicted in Tony Kushner's play script entitled *Angels in America*. To analyze this article, descriptive qualitative methods and a sociological approach were used. The data were collected using reading and note-taking techniques, which were then analyzed using Weijers' theory of hedonism.

Following that, the thesis conducted by Arif Santoso (2022), with the title *Hedonism Practices as Reflected in American Psycho*. The focus of this thesis is to analyze the acts of hedonism that were done by the main character of the film,

Patrick Bateman, as depicted in the film *American Psycho*. This thesis uses the descriptive qualitative method and Weijers' theory of hedonism to analyze the film.

Moreover, the thesis conducted by Azmi Julian Mawardi (2022), with the title of *Hedonism as Reflected through the Main Character in Inventing Anna Film*. This thesis is solely focused on how hedonism is presented in the film and how it affects the main character of the film *Inventing Anna*. Using dramaturgical theory, this thesis aims to determine the hedonistic lifestyles of Anna and analyze the cause and effect of the hedonism itself.

Last of all, a journal article written by Sam Smucker (2018) with the title of *Moral Choices and Social Mobility in Lady Bird and The Graduation*. This article aims to explain the moral choices and social mobility of the main characters in both films. The result shows that the main character of the film *Lady Bird* (2017) lacks the moral nature of her character because she was rather uninterested with her surroundings. The social mobility of the main character of the film *Lady Bird* (2017) also drastically changes and returns to normal not too long after the changes because everything she presents to her higher social group is all fake.

Building on the insights from these previous studies, this research takes a unique approach by examining how *Lady Bird* (2017) portrays hedonistic pleasure and connects it to the culture of American teenagers in the early 2000s. Unlike Wijaya (2021) and Smucker (2018), who focus on psychoanalysis and moral choices in the film, this study explores how the main character's pursuit of pleasure in the film *Lady Bird* (2017) resembles hedonism behavior. While Ridho and

Ningsih (2022) and Santoso (2022) investigate hedonism in films like *The Wolf of Wall Street* and *American Psycho*, this research highlights teenage experiences within a coming-of-age story, offering a fresh angle. By analyzing the film's characters and plot alongside the cultural context of consumerism, peer pressure, and identity struggles, this study connects narrative elements with cultural discussions. Ultimately, it shows how *Lady Bird* represents the hedonistic habits that shaped American teenager's life and behavior during that era.

1.6. Research Methods

1.6.1. The Data and the Source of Data

The writer used the scenes and dialogue from the film *Lady Bird* (2017) by Greta Gerwig as the Primary data of this research. Aside from the movie itself as the main data of this research, the writer also utilizes additional sources that come from related books, journals and articles that were related to this research and used as the secondary and supporting data.

1.6.2. The Method of Collecting Data

In this study, the writer will utilize the library research method to gather the necessary data and information, which will serve as a reliable source for analysis. George (2008) defines library research as a systematic process that involves gathering and analyzing accepted facts, identifying unknowns, speculating, applying logical procedures rigorously, verifying, evaluating, repeating, and interpreting findings to extend understanding.

Furthermore, besides library research methods, the writer also uses documentation methods and note-taking techniques to collect all the data. Note-taking is the practice of recording information from multiple sources by writing down the required data (Creswell, 2014). Furthermore, the data was collected through several steps to make accurate data. First watching and intensively listening to the film, and then finding the relevant data shown in each scene. Finally, note the data and take a screenshot of the scene containing the required data.

1.6.3. The Methods of Approach

In this study, the writer will apply narrative elements as the objective approach to explore the character and characterizations, conflict, and setting in the film *Lady Bird* (2017) by Greta Gerwig. Aside from that, the writer also uses cinematography elements such as camera angles, types of shot, and sound theory to support the analysis. Meanwhile, to analyze the extrinsic elements, the writer will use Weijers' theory of Hedonism that explained about types of hedonism. In analyzing the data, the writer will be using a sociological approach and the theory of hedonism by Weijers. The data would be explained through a qualitative descriptive method.

1.7. Writing Organizations

The organization of the study of this article will be divided into five chapter, which are:

1. Chapter I: INTRODUCTION This chapter contains the Background of the Study, Research Problems, Objective of the Study, Scope of the Study,

Previous Studies, Methods of the Study and Organization of the Writing that will act as an introductory part of the thesis.

2. Chapter II: INTRINSIC THEORITICAL FRAMEWORK

This chapter contains the theory used in the analysis of this research, consisting of theories regarding Intrinsic Aspects (Narrative Elements and Cinematography elements).

3. Chapter III: EXTRINSIC THEORITICAL FRAMEWORKS

This chapter contains the theory used in the analysis of this research, consisting of theories and histories regarding Extrinsic Aspects of the subject.

4. Chapter IV: RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This chapter contains the results of the analysis analyzed using the previous theories. This chapter also contains the essentials of the thesis which were written systematically with reliable theories to support the arguments. In this chapter, all research questions that arise earlier have been answered along with logical arguments and evidence to support them.

5. Chapter V: CONCLUSION

This chapter contains the conclusion and critical generalization of the Result and Discussion in the previous chapter. This chapter also contains suggestions based on the limitations that are found within this thesis. The suggestion is about further research that may be done by other researchers with the same scope of study as this research.