

CHAPTER IV

RESULT AND DISCUSSIONS

4.1. Intrinsic Analysis in the film *Lady Bird* (2017)

4.1.1. Character and Characterization

The main character of *Lady Bird* (2017)—Christine “Lady Bird” McPherson—is a senior high school student who lives in Sacramento throughout her life. She is portrayed as a teenager who is deeply emotional, often self-centered, and constantly in search of personal freedom and identity. Her characterization throughout the film is shaped by a mix of contradictions—she wants to be independent but still depends on others, she seeks attention yet pushes people away, and she often acts out without thinking of the consequences.

Her personality is shown through her actions and dialogues in the films. One of the most noticeable traits in *Lady Bird* is her selfishness and impulsiveness. In the opening scene, when Lady Bird and her mother were arguing and her mother refuses to call her “Lady Bird” because that’s not her real name. She keeps insisting to be called as “Lady Bird” because her mother has promised to do so. In the end, she feels frustrated and impulsively opens the car window and jumps out of the moving car, leaving her mother shocked and scared by what just happened.



Picture 2



Picture 3

Pictures 2-3. Stone-headed Daughter
 (*Lady Bird*, 2017, 00:02:27 – 00:02:36)

This scene supports the way *Lady Bird*'s character is shown throughout the film. In Pictures 2-3, the camera work helps show the emotional tension between Lady Bird and her mother. Picture 2 uses a close-up shot of Lady Bird's face in profile to let us clearly see her expression, which looks distant and unhappy, showing how she feels in that moment. She's placed on the right side of the frame, and the blurry background outside the car window makes her look isolated—suggesting that she feels stuck or limited, especially with her future plans. In Picture 3, a medium shot shows both Lady Bird and her mother sitting in the car. The balanced framing highlights the distance between them, both physically and emotionally. We can also see their body language and facial reactions as they talk, which adds to the feeling of conflict. The lighting in both shots is soft and natural, likely from daylight, which gives the scene a realistic, everyday feeling. It also helps focus on the dialogue and emotions without any dramatic visual effects. Altogether, the use of camera distance, framing, and lighting makes the scene feel

honest and grounded, showing the struggles in their relationship and the pressure of financial limitations.

Mom : Whatever we give you, it's never enough. It's never enough.
 Lady Bird : It is enough
 Mom : Do you know how much it costs to raise you? And how much you're just throwing away every day?
 Lady Bird : Give me a number.
 Mom : What?
 Lady Bird : Give me a number.
 Mom : I don't understand.
 Lady Bird : You give me a number for how much it cost to raise me. And I'm going to get older and make a lot of money, and write you a check for what I owe you. So that I never have to speak to you again.
 Mom : Well I highly doubt that you will be able to get a job good enough to do that.

(*Lady Bird*, 2017, 00:55:00 — 0 0:55:38)

This short exchange between Lady Bird and her mother happens during a tense argument, and it reveals a lot about their broken communication and emotional distance. The dialogue uses direct, emotional language, with little space for softness or understanding. The mother starts with a strong statement, “*Whatever we give you, it's never enough,*” showing her deep frustration and exhaustion. This line reflects how she feels unappreciated for all the sacrifices she makes for the family. Lady Bird quickly replies, “*It is enough,*” but her tone is defensive, not thankful. When her mother brings up how much it costs to raise her, Lady Bird responds with, “*Give me a number.*” She repeats the line, pushing the conversation toward money instead of feelings. This shift makes the scene feel cold and transactional. It shows how Lady Bird tries to turn an emotional moment into something logical, as a way to protect herself. Her final words—saying she'll pay her mom back so they “*never have to speak again*”—are harsh and painful. They

reflect how the argument is not just about money or school, but something much deeper: the lack of emotional connection between them. The way the dialogue is written and delivered highlights how both characters are hurt, but neither can express it in a healthy way.

This dialogue supports the way Lady Bird is shown throughout the film—as someone who is still growing emotionally and often reacts in selfish or hurtful ways. Instead of recognizing her mother’s hard work and sacrifices, she focuses on proving a point. By asking for “*a number*,” she avoids the real issue: her mom’s emotional pain and desire for respect. This reaction shows Lady Bird’s immaturity. She thinks that if she pays her mother back in money, their relationship will be over—as if money could erase years of love, effort, and sacrifice. It also shows how Lady Bird misunderstands what her mother truly wants, which is not money, but appreciation and understanding. This moment fits with how Lady Bird is often shown in the film—she wants to be independent and grown-up, but she still doesn’t understand the weight of her words or actions. Her response is not just ungrateful, but deeply insensitive, especially in a moment when her mother is trying to be honest about their struggles. At the same time, it also shows that Lady Bird is hurt too, and doesn’t know how to deal with that pain. Instead of talking about her feelings, she lashes out. This dialogue reveals the emotional walls between her and her mother, and how their relationship is full of love that often gets lost in anger and misunderstanding.

All in all, Lady Bird’s character is shown as a complicated teenager who is trying to figure herself out. She is emotional, rebellious, and often unsure about

what she wants, which makes her actions feel honest and relatable. Her constant struggle between wanting to be seen and wanting to break free is what drives most of her decisions. This exploration of her identity helps the audience understand why she acts the way she does later in the film, especially when it comes to her hedonistic choices. Her behavior isn't just random—it comes from a place of wanting to feel something real and find where she belongs.

4.1.2. Conflict

4.1.2.1. Internal Conflict

In *Lady Bird* (2017), internal conflict is deeply tied to the main character's search for identity. Lady Bird often feels torn between who she is and who she wants to be. She dreams of escaping her hometown and living a different, more exciting life. However, this desire constantly clashes with the reality of her family situation, her grades, and her self-worth.

One of the internal conflicts can be seen when Lady Bird pretends to be someone she's not—like lying about where she lives to impress popular girl at her school. Deep down, she knows she isn't being honest, but her desire for acceptance and status is stronger than her values. This shows the struggle within her: she wants to be seen and appreciated, but she also wants to be true to herself. These emotional tensions are common throughout the film and reflect her difficulty in understanding her identity during a complicated period in her life.

Another internal conflict occurs when she finally gets what she wanted—she moves to New York for college—but still ends up feeling lost. After getting drunk

at a party and ending up in the hospital, she begins to reflect on her life and realizes how important her family and hometown actually were. This change in perspective highlights her emotional growth, which comes from resolving the conflict between her desires and her deeper values.

4.1.2.2. External Conflict

Lady Bird's journey in the film is also filled with external conflicts, such as the love-and-hate relationship with between Lady Bird and her mother. They often argue because they have different expectations. Lady Bird wants freedom, expression, and recognition, while her mother focuses on responsibility, financial stability, and discipline. These differences in opinion between Lady Bird and her mother create repeated tension throughout the film.

Another external conflict comes from Lady Bird's social environment. She often feels disconnected from her wealthier classmates and struggles with the pressure to appear more "successful" or "normal" than she actually is. Her wish to be accepted into a different social group creates some kind of external issues between herself and her surroundings. The societal pressure that appear because of this external conflict in a certain way becomes an external force that challenges her honesty, relationships, and sense of self.

4.1.3. Setting

The setting in Lady Bird plays a big role in shaping the story, the characters, and the overall mood of the film. The film takes place in Sacramento, California, in the early 2000s, which isn't just a random backdrop—it really helps reflect the life

Lady Bird is trying to escape, as well as the time period that influences the way she thinks, acts, and sees the world.

4.1.3.1. Setting of Place

The place setting—Sacramento—is important because Lady Bird sees it as boring, small, and limiting. She constantly compares her hometown to the exciting, cultured places she reads about or sees in the media. In one scene, she says she wants to go to college “*where the culture is,*” clearly showing her desire to leave what she sees as a dead-end town. Her surroundings make her feel stuck, and that fuels her dreams of escaping to somewhere bigger and more glamorous, like New York. But while she spends most of the film trying to reject Sacramento, the city is also where she grows, makes mistakes, and eventually starts to understand herself. By the end of the film, she remembers the city with a kind of quiet appreciation, especially when she reflects on her childhood while driving through the streets.



Picture 4



Picture 5

Pictures 4-5. The Boring Sacramento
(*Lady Bird*, 2017, 00:08:27 – 00:08:40)

In Picture 4, the pedestal shot is used to present a wide view of Sacramento, capturing the city with muted colors and neutral natural lighting. The framing shows the scenery in a still and composed way, emphasizing the quietness and plainness

of the environment. Similarly, Picture 5 uses a dolly shot in a wide frame to mimic the perspective of someone looking out from a moving car, with warm tones and soft sunlight that gives the city a nostalgic atmosphere. Both scenes visually present Sacramento not as an exciting or fast-paced city, but as a calm, everyday place—almost too ordinary for someone like Lady Bird, who dreams of bigger things.

4.1.3.2. Setting of Time

The time setting—early 2000s—is also a big part of the film’s atmosphere. This was a time before smartphones and social media, so a lot of teenage communication happened face-to-face or over the phone. These details give the film a certain nostalgic feel. It also shows how teenagers during that time were influenced by what they saw in magazines, TV shows, and the people around them. Lady Bird, like many teens of that era, is very aware of class differences, appearance, and what it means to be “cool.” These pressures are shown in the way she changes herself to fit in—how she dresses, who she hangs out with, and even how she talks.

Lady Bird : I wish I could live through something.
 Mom : Aren't you?
 Lady Bird : Nope. The only exciting thing about 2002 is that it’s a
 palindrome.
 Mom : Okay, fine. Well, yours is the worst life of all, so you win.
 ((*Lady Bird*, 2017, 00:01:45 – 00:01:50))

The short exchange between Lady Bird and her mother at the beginning of the film directly establishes the time setting as 2002. When Lady Bird remarks, “*The only exciting thing about 2002 is that it’s a palindrome,*” she not only reveals her dissatisfaction with her life but also mentions the exact year. This line subtly

but effectively anchors the story in the early 2000s, a period before the digital age fully took over teenage life. It supports the nostalgic tone of the film and reflects the cultural context of the time—when identity, appearance, and social life were shaped more by real-world interactions and traditional media like magazines and TV, rather than social media.

4.1.3.3. Setting of Social

The social setting in *Lady Bird* highlights the class divide that the main character constantly feels. Even though she attends a private Catholic school, *Lady Bird* comes from a working-class family. Her mother works double shifts at a psychiatric hospital, and her father is unemployed. These circumstances place her in a socially awkward position among her wealthier classmates, and she becomes very aware of what she lacks—such as a cellphone, a nice house, or a fashionable wardrobe. As a result, she feels out of place and often tries to hide her real background in order to fit in with others at school.

Mom : Do you think I like working double shifts at the psych hospital?
 Lady Bird : No.
 Mom : You needed to go to the Catholic School because your brother saw someone knifed in front of him at the public school. Is that what you want?
 Mom : You think your dad and I don't know how ashamed that you are of us? Your dad knows. Your dad knows why you ask him to drop you off a block away from school every day.
 Lady Bird : Dad, I didn't mean to.
 Mom : You made him feel horrible! Horrible! You know that?
 Lady Bird : I'm sorry.
 ((*Lady Bird*, 2017, 00:54:16 – 00:54:39))

The dialogue exchange between Lady Bird and her mother strongly reveals this tension. The conversation is emotionally loaded and uses direct and confrontational language, especially from the mother. For example, she says, “*You think your dad and I don’t know how ashamed you are of us? Your dad knows. Your dad knows why you ask him to drop you off a block away from school every day.*” The repetition of “*your dad knows*” emphasizes the emotional impact of Lady Bird’s actions and how deeply they hurt her father. Her mother’s use of rhetorical questions and accusations points to her frustration and disappointment. Meanwhile, Lady Bird’s short and apologetic replies (“*I didn’t mean to.*” / “*I’m sorry.*”) show her guilt and helplessness. Through this exchange, we can see how class differences don’t just shape Lady Bird’s external social life but also affect the way she communicates with her family. The dialogue reflects how shame, pressure, and a desire to belong shape both what is said and what is left unsaid in their household.

4.2. Extrinsic Analysis

In accordance with the objective of this study, the writer divides the extrinsic analysis into two parts. The first one is to explain what kind of hedonism acts done by the main character depicted in the film *Lady Bird* (2017) by Greta Gerwig. While, the second one is to find the reasons why the main character of the film *Lady Bird* (2017) by Greta Gerwig commit hedonism acts.

4.2.1. Types of Hedonism Acts Depicted in the Film

Based on hedonism theory proposed by Weijers (2012), the writer found 4 out of 6 types of hedonism acts done by the main character in the film *Lady Bird*

(2017), which are folk hedonism, value hedonism, motivational hedonism, and hedonistic egoism.

4.2.1.1. Folk Hedonism

Folk hedonism is the most straightforward and short-sighted pursuit of pleasure without considering the effects of their actions, which often leads to harmful outcomes in the long run. As non-philosophers defined it, folk hedonist is regarded as a person who pursuit individual pleasure without worrying about the effect for themselves or for the other person involved (Mawardi, 2022). Taken that definition into account, the data bellow are considered as acts of folk hedonism.



Picture 6



Picture 7

Pictures 6-7. Another Crush, Another Approach
(*Lady Bird*, 2017, 00:48:57 – 00:49:20)

In the Picture 6 and Picture 7, the scenes featuring Lady Bird and her partner are shot with long and medium-long distances, capturing their bodies fully and placing them within their surroundings. Picture 6, by the pool, is dimly lit with string lights in the background, creating a dreamy, romantic atmosphere that foregrounds intimacy. The characters are positioned slightly beside the center, framed tightly together to visually highlight their physical closeness. Picture 7, set indoors and lit with warm tones, uses a doorway as a frame-within-the-frame,

placing the characters against a blank door as they engage in a passionate embrace. The lighting casts shadows that focus attention on their actions rather than their expressions, emphasizing the act over emotion. The camera maintains enough distance to capture Lady Bird's lifted leg and physical submission, making her vulnerability and eagerness to please visually prominent.

This scene reflects folk hedonism because Lady Bird is chasing pleasure without thinking deeply about what it might mean for her. She's drawn to her partner because he seems cool and mysterious, and she believes that being with him—especially in a sexual way—will bring her happiness. Even though she hesitates and says she doesn't want to have sex yet, she still puts herself in the situation because she's focused on what feels good in the moment. This short-sighted decision, made in the hope of gaining affection or status, matches the idea of folk hedonism: doing something just because it seems pleasurable now, without worrying about whether it's right or if it could hurt later.



Picture 8



Picture 9

Pictures 8-9. Juvenile Delinquents
(*Lady Bird*, 2017, 00:30:10 – 00:30:17)

In these scenes, the film uses a mix of medium long shots and medium shots to show Lady Bird and her friends during their late-night hangout. Picture 8 places them in the middle of the street at night, with low lighting that makes them appear

almost as silhouettes. This choice of lighting and framing creates a secretive and intimate feeling, as if they're in their own world, separate from adult rules or expectations. The use of medium long shots at the beginning lets us see their body language and how comfortable they are around each other, which helps set the tone of youthful freedom. When the scene moves to inside the car in Picture 9, the camera switches to a closer medium shot, capturing the joy and excitement on their faces. The lighting becomes softer but still dim, highlighting the street lights outside while keeping the focus on the characters' expressions as they laugh and sing. This technical approach makes the audience feel like they are part of the moment—swept up in the thrill of the night.

This entire scene strongly reflects the concept of folk hedonism. Lady Bird and her friends are clearly prioritizing fun and pleasure, without thinking about the possible dangers of what they're doing—like using drugs and driving under the influence. Their carefree attitude shows how they're caught in the moment, chasing excitement without worrying about consequences that could affect their health or safety. The way the camera and lighting work together supports this idea by making the night feel magical and fun, hiding the risks behind a warm, nostalgic glow. This is what makes it a strong example of folk hedonism—it looks joyful on the surface, but underneath, it shows how easily people, especially teenagers, can fall into harmful behaviors when pleasure becomes the only focus.



Picture 10



Picture 11

Pictures 10-11. Drunk and Dusted
 (*Lady Bird* (2017), 01:23:24 – 01:24:40)

In Picture 10, the scene uses a medium close-up shot of Lady Bird at a college party, tilting her head back to drink directly from a bottle. The camera frames her from the chest up, centring her in the composition to emphasize her action, while the dim, warm lighting evokes the atmosphere of a nighttime party—intimate, chaotic, and a little reckless. The use of shadows and the surrounding blurred figures help isolate her in the moment, underscoring her immersion in the experience. The lyric subtitle “*What this world has done to me*” adds a melancholic undertone, suggesting that this act of indulgence may be a response to emotional struggle rather than just a celebration. In contrast, Picture 11 presents a stark visual shift: a wide shot captures Lady Bird alone in a sterile hospital room, lying on a bed in the same outfit, now smudged and worn. The camera pulls back to show more of the environment—cold, clinical, and distant—highlighting the aftermath of the night’s pleasures. The bright, flat lighting removes any warmth, instead exposing her vulnerability and regret in a setting stripped of joy or excitement.

These visual choices reflect folk hedonism through Lady Bird’s actions and their consequences. Her choice to drink excessively at the party aligns with the core of folk hedonism—a pursuit of short-term pleasure with little regard for the long-

term impact. The excitement and temporary escape offered by alcohol serve as a form of instant gratification, which folk hedonism defines as inherently shortsighted. However, the sudden transition to the hospital setting makes clear the consequences of this indulgence. Her physical state, combined with the emotionally detached atmosphere of the hospital, underscores the harm that comes from prioritizing momentary satisfaction over personal well-being. Thus, these scenes together illustrate how folk hedonism is visually and narratively embodied in Lady Bird.

Thank you! Here's a refined and cohesive closing statement for your subchapter on folk hedonism, incorporating the example and theoretical reference you provided, while maintaining your preferred tone:

Referring to the theory of hedonism proposed by Weijers (2012), a hedonist is described as someone who never passes up an opportunity to indulge in the pleasures, even when such behavior may lead to serious consequences like relationship conflicts, financial strain, or emotional distress. This definition aligns clearly with Lady Bird's actions throughout the film, as she engages in premarital sex, experiments with substances like drugs and cigarettes, and consumes alcohol excessively. These behaviors, as highlighted in the previous scenes, reflect her pursuit of temporary satisfaction at the expense of her long-term well-being. This pattern of behavior represents folk hedonism, where Lady Bird's impulsive need for immediate pleasure—without consideration of the outcomes—leads to moments of regret, disconnection, and physical vulnerability. Through her, the film subtly critiques this form of hedonism by portraying not just the thrill of rebellion, but also its emotional and social aftermath.

4.2.1.2. Value Hedonism

Value hedonism is something that regard all and only pleasure is intrinsically valuable and all and only pain is intrinsically invaluable—for its own sake. Pleasure can only be called intrinsically valuable is because even if it is not lead to any other benefit, it would still be a good experience (Katz, 2016). These dialogue between Lady Bird and her mother bellow clearly represent value hedonism.

Mom : ...you're not even worth state tuition, Christine.
 Lady Bird : My name is Lady Bird.
 Mom : Well, actually, it's not, and it's ridiculous because your name is Christine.
 Lady Bird : Call me Lady Bird, like you said you would.
 (*Lady Bird*, 2017, 00:03:05 – 00:03:10)

In this dialogue, the exchange between Lady Bird and her mother is emotionally charged, with direct speech that shows their strained relationship. The tone of the mother's line, "*you're not even worth state tuition*," is sharp, dismissive, and intended to hurt. It shows her disappointment and frustration. Lady Bird's response, "*My name is Lady Bird*," is not just a correction—it is a firm assertion of her chosen identity. The repetition of the name, especially when she insists, "*Call me Lady Bird, like you said you would*," adds a layer of emotional intensity. This reflects her longing for recognition and respect. The dialogue uses a back-and-forth rhythm with short, clipped lines, showing how both characters are emotionally invested in this argument, though neither is willing to back down. The clash here is not just about names, but about control, identity, and validation.

This moment clearly reflects value hedonism through Lady Bird's emotional attachment to the name she has chosen for herself. Even though the name "Lady Bird" brings her no direct or practical benefit, it gives her a strong sense of self and emotional satisfaction. She finds pleasure and meaning in being called by that name simply because it represents who she wants to be, not who she was born as. On the other hand, being denied that name—especially by her mother—causes her emotional pain. This contrast between the pleasure she gains from being called "Lady Bird" and the pain she feels when it is rejected shows how deeply she values that experience for its own sake. It is not about what the name leads to, but about how the name itself makes her feel—an example of how Lady Bird's actions align with the idea of value hedonism.

Lady Bird : If Danny and I get married, and then his grandma died, I'd inherit the dream house.
 Jullie : Wouldn't his parents get it?
 Lady Bird : Oh yeah. We'd have to kill them, and we'd have to kill his older brothers too.
 (*Lady Bird*, 2017, 00:30:06 – 00:30:18)

This short exchange between Lady Bird and Julie is filled with exaggeration and sarcasm, which can be seen in the way Lady Bird casually imagines a future where she marries Danny just to inherit his family's house. Her use of "*if Danny and I get married, and then his grandma died*" shows a mix of innocent fantasy and a dark sense of humor. When Julie replies with a logical question, "*Wouldn't his parents get it?*", Lady Bird responds jokingly with, "*Oh yeah. We'd have to kill them, and we'd have to kill his older brothers too.*" The exaggerated tone and absurd idea of killing Danny's whole family are not meant to be taken literally.

Instead, the language shows how Lady Bird plays with fantasy to escape her current reality. The joke is built on a dramatic escalation, which reveals her desire for something she doesn't have—a comfortable, beautiful life in a dream house.

This moment reflects value hedonism because Lady Bird finds emotional satisfaction simply by imagining herself in that ideal situation. The house she talks about symbolizes pleasure and comfort, and even though she's not close to getting it, the daydream alone gives her joy. She treats the idea of living in that house as something deeply desirable, even if it doesn't bring any other benefit except personal happiness. That imagined pleasure is enough for her, which fits with the idea of value hedonism: that pleasure, even in the form of fantasy, can be valuable just for its own sake. This also connects to Lady Bird's character as someone who often chases personal meaning and emotional reward, even in unrealistic or exaggerated ways.

4.2.1.3. Motivational Hedonism

Motivational hedonist is a person who desire to only pursuing pleasure and avoiding pain as a motivation for their action and behavior (Moore, 2004). Motivational hedonism can be seen in the scene where Lady Bird secretly asks her father to help her fill out the financial aid application for an East Coast college without her mom knowing in the pictures bellow.



Picture 12



Picture 13

Pictures 12-13. Conditional Love
(*Lady Bird*, 2017, 00:09:57 – 00:10:16)

Picture 12 presents a medium shot of Lady Bird and her father seated in a car. The framing is intimate and balanced, positioning both characters in a confined space that highlights their physical proximity and emotional bond. The lighting is soft and natural, filtered through the car windows, suggesting a sense of warmth and calm. Lady Bird is caught mid-sentence, her expression animated, while her father maintains a gentle smile, signaling quiet support. This visual arrangement emphasizes their private, conspiratorial moment—an emotionally charged exchange within the safe boundaries of the vehicle. The car serves as a neutral zone, away from the mother's dominant presence in the household, reinforcing the secrecy and vulnerability of their conversation. Meanwhile, Picture 13, taken from the same car setting, captures an embrace between Lady Bird and her father. The shot closes in on their bodies, cutting out distractions and centering the viewer's attention solely on their emotional connection. His hand placed securely around her back adds a protective tone, while her face is hidden, suggesting trust and reliance. The lighting remains consistent—warm and natural—enhancing the authenticity of the moment.

This emotionally intimate exchange visually reflects motivational hedonism, which argue that human actions are primarily motivated by the pursuit of pleasure and the avoidance of pain. Lady Bird's choice to secretly apply for East Coast colleges, against her mother's wishes, is driven by her desire to pursue happiness—freedom, independence, and a new beginning—while avoiding the emotional pain of familial conflict and rejection. Her insistence on secrecy, expressed through dialogue and reinforced visually by the private setting of the car, underscores her internal conflict. She is willing to bypass her mother's authority and potentially cause emotional tension, so long as she can avoid immediate confrontation and maintain her pursuit of long-term personal fulfillment. Thus, both the visual narrative and Lady Bird's behavior reveal her as a motivational hedonist—someone whose choices are guided not just by what feels good, but by what spares her from pain.

Jenna : Hello.
 Lady Bird : Hi.
 Jenna : So, this is your house?
 Lady Bird : Yeah.
 Jenna : That lady in the other house was totally freaked out.
 Lady Bird : That's my friend's grandma. That's her house.
 Jenna : Why did you say it was your house?
 Lady Bird : I wished I lived in that house.
 Jenna : I don't even sort of understand why somebody would lie about that.
 Lady Bird : I... I didn't lie.
 Jenna : You lied. You're a liar. I hate dishonesty.
 Lady Bird : I'm sorry.
 Jenna : Apology accepted, I guess.
 Lady Bird : Are we still friends?
 Jenna : I mean, if you're still Kyle's girlfriend, then yeah, I guess I'll see you around.

(*Lady Bird*, 2017, 00:56:27 – 00:57:22)

The dialogue between Lady Bird and her popular friend, Jenna, reflects a moment where language is used as a defense and a tool for self-preservation. When Jenna questions Lady Bird about her dishonesty, Lady Bird initially denies the accusation with the line “*I didn’t lie,*” even though the earlier statement “*I wished I lived in that house*” already implies the admission. This hesitation and correction in her speech reflect an attempt to soften the truth, suggesting that Lady Bird is aware of the consequences of her actions but chooses to avoid the painful confrontation directly. Her quick and straightforward apology, “*I’m sorry,*” is delivered without further defense or justification, showing her motivation to restore harmony in the conversation. The simple structure of the sentence emphasizes the urgency of the moment—Lady Bird is not explaining or arguing; she is pleading. The follow-up question, “*Are we still friends?*” also highlights her desperation. It is short, direct, and emotionally loaded. The use of the present tense here—*are*—indicates that Lady Bird is not just thinking about the past action (lying), but about how it affects her current emotional state and social standing. From a language perspective, this entire exchange shows Lady Bird’s choice of words, tone, and sentence structure as being shaped by her desire to seek comfort and avoid pain. She chooses to speak in ways that might preserve her connection to Jenna, even though she has been caught in a lie.

This moment clearly supports Lady Bird’s tendency as a motivational hedonist. Her actions are not purely about status for its own sake, but about the pleasure and validation that come with being accepted in a social circle she values. Her lie about the house, her apology, and her plea for continued friendship all serve

as examples of behavior driven by the internal motivation to maximize happiness (through social approval and connection) and minimize pain (rejection or loneliness). As described earlier, Lady Bird often chases after what feels good, even if it means hiding her real self or bending the truth. Her speech here, then, becomes a clear example of how motivational hedonism plays out not just in her choices, but in the way she uses language to manage relationships.

4.2.1.4. Hedonistic Egoism

Throughout the film, Lady Bird often places her desires above the feelings or needs of those around her, especially when interacting with her mother. In this particular moment in the dialogue below, her behavior reflects the nature of a hedonistic egoist, someone who seeks personal satisfaction without considering whether their actions may disturb others. Her insistence on continuing the music right after a long car ride—despite her mother’s request to pause—highlights how she prioritizes her own pleasure (in this case, being constantly entertained) rather than mutual emotional presence. It reflects a pattern of Lady Bird’s character: she often craves stimulation, distraction, and gratification, even if this pursuit creates distance or friction with the people closest to her. This act is not just about playing music, but about asserting her need for self-gratification in opposition to another’s emotional need. Her disregard for the shared moment of silence illustrates her individualistic approach to happiness, which is a central trait of hedonistic egoism.

Lady Bird : Our college trip took 21 hours and five minutes.
(proceed to play the next album)
 Mom : Hey, wait. Let's just sit with what we heard.
 Lady Bird : Are you serious?
 Mom : Well, we don't have to constantly be entertaining ourselves,
 do we?
(Lady Bird, 2017, 00:01:28 – 00:01:37)

This brief dialogue showcases a subtle yet meaningful tension expressed through word choice, tone, and implication. When Lady Bird begins with, “*Our college trip took 21 hours and five minutes,*” her precise time-tracking signals a desire to move forward quickly—immediately followed by the action of playing the next album. This abrupt shift suggests she is focused on entertainment and noise, revealing her inclination toward instant gratification. Her mother, on the other hand, softly interrupts with, “*Hey, wait. Let's just sit with what we heard.*” The use of the phrase “*sit with*” implies emotional depth—a call for reflection and quietness. This contrasts sharply with Lady Bird’s reaction, “*Are you serious?*” which is both dismissive and challenging. The interrogative tone paired with a rhetorical question shows frustration and disbelief, implying that silence is pointless or even unbearable for her. The mother’s response—“*Well, we don't have to constantly be entertaining ourselves, do we?*”—introduces a philosophical contrast. The word “*constantly*” suggests that Lady Bird’s behavior is habitual, not occasional. This becomes a critique of her persistent need for stimulation. Meanwhile, the phrase “*do we?*” at the end functions as a soft rhetorical prompt, inviting Lady Bird to consider a shared emotional space, yet Lady Bird’s earlier reaction has already shut down that invitation.

In this exchange, the language reflects a clash not just of preferences but of values: Lady Bird values entertainment and distraction; her mother values presence and reflection. The contrast in their speech patterns and word choices highlights how Lady Bird's pursuit of pleasure disregards the emotional atmosphere of the moment. Therefore, her response represents hedonistic egoism—not out of malice, but from a self-centred drive for uninterrupted gratification.



Picture 14



Picture 15

Pictures 14-15. Little Thief
(*Lady Bird*, 2017, 00:14:19 – 00:14:33)

The scene in Picture 14 takes place in a supermarket, captured using a long shot that clearly shows both Lady Bird and her mother standing in an aisle. The camera keeps a distance, allowing us to see the entire space, including the shelves full of products around them. This kind of framing helps place the characters in a realistic, everyday setting and makes their conversation feel more grounded. The lighting is bright and natural, showing that this is a normal part of their day. The products around them—especially the books and magazines—highlight the topic of their conversation. After her mother refuses to buy the magazine, the next shot in Picture 15 shows Lady Bird alone in the same aisle. The framing remains wide and steady as she slips the magazine under her clothes, suggesting that she is making a private decision in a public space. The quiet tone of the scene, without any dramatic

lighting or movement, makes her action feel casual but also rebellious. The choice to use a long take and minimal editing focuses attention on what she does, not just what she says.

This scene clearly reflects hedonistic egoism, where a person puts their own happiness or desire first, even if it causes trouble for others. Lady Bird's action—stealing the magazine after her mother says no—shows that she values her personal wish above the rules or her mother's authority. Her mother already said that reading magazine in bed is something that rich people do and reminding her that they cannot afford that kind of luxury. But instead of accepting this reality, Lady Bird still wants to experience the comfort of reading in bed, like the rich people she imagines. She acts on that desire by stealing, even though it's dishonest. This shows that her decision is driven by her personal pleasure, not by what is right. She ignores the consequences, and this harms the trust between her and her mother. It becomes a clear example of how motivational hedonism works—when someone acts based on what gives them satisfaction, without thinking about others.

4.2.2. The Causes of the Main Character's Hedonism Acts

Referring to Milner's book about *Freaks, Geeks, and Cool Kids* of America in early 2000s (2004), the social context and culture of American teenager in that era is shaped by several factors, namely consumerism due to an economic shifts, the representation of popular culture by media portrayal, and the changing role of schools in teenager's lives. These aspects is well presented in the film through the actions of the main character in doing hedonism behavior. Just like how Lady Bird's

action was driven by the desire of pursuing pleasure, enjoyment, and status through material consumption and social activities.

4.2.2.1. Hedonistic Pursuit of Social Status

The main character of the film, *Lady Bird*, is presented as a high school student in senior year who are struggling to find her place in a society that is heavily valued by materialism, social standing, and appearances. Just like every normal looking teenager in that era, *Lady Bird* is deeply influenced by her desire to fit into the “cool crowd” at her Catholic school. Her desire for being socially accepted within her surrounding is what lead her to commit numerous hedonistic behaviors—such as lying about her family’s financial status, hanging out with more popular students, distancing herself from her true best friend, and commit negatives activities like doing drugs, cigarettes, and sex—just to experience having social pleasures in the form of attention, popularity, and being seen as a “cool kids”.

Just as can be seen in the examples of scenes bellow, *Lady Bird* tried everything to befriend the most popular girl in her school, and distancing herself from her best friend. She even decided to pull up a prank to her favorite nun in order to look good in the popular girl’s eyes and enter their social circle.



Picture 16



Picture 17

Pictures 16-17. Social Climbing
(*Lady Bird*, 2017, 00:38:46 – 00:39:40)

In Picture 16, the camera captures Lady Bird in a medium shot with a centered group composition, placing her side-by-side with the most popular girl in her school and other popular girls in her class. The eye-level angle establishes equality among the group members, symbolizing that Lady Bird has succeeded—at least temporarily—in integrating into the social circle she longs for. The framing distinctly excludes her former best friend, showing a clear visual separation between her old, genuine friendship and her new, status-driven alliance. The lighting is soft and natural, maintaining a grounded, realistic tone that contrasts with the performative nature of Lady Bird's actions. This visual presentation reflects a scene that, on the surface, appears casual and ordinary, but it subtly underscores the emotional cost of her decision to leave behind sincerity in exchange for popularity.

This moment visually and narratively represents motivational hedonism, as Lady Bird's actions are clearly driven by her internal desire to gain pleasure through social approval. By choosing to associate with the popular girl and lie about her background, Lady Bird demonstrates how teenage hedonism in the early 2000s often manifested through the pursuit of social pleasures—attention, admiration, and acceptance. Her behavior aligns with Milner's (2004: 119) concept of adolescent culture, in which teenagers are pushed to obtain material or symbolic markers of status to secure their identity and social standing. Lady Bird's hedonistic behavior—distancing herself from her best friend, exaggerating her family's wealth, and pulling pranks for attention—illustrates how pleasure in this context is not about physical indulgence, but about emotional gratification through validation.

Her desperation to maintain her position within the “cool crowd” shows that for her, popularity itself is the pleasure she seeks.

4.2.2.2. Peer Pressure and Identity Formation

The pursuit of pleasure and status is also closely linked to peer pressure and the formation of teenage identity (Milner, 2004). Peer pressure pushes teens to conform to group norms, and these norms often prioritize activities and behaviors that bring immediate social rewards and enjoyment. For instances, in the film, *Lady Bird* have to do the things out of her will just to be accepted by the new social circles that she wants, like pulling a prank on her favorite teacher and nun, smoking cigarette, drinking alcohol, and many more. She did that because she wants to receives social validation, attention, popularity, and pleasure, which aligns heavily with hedonistic values. *Lady Bird*'s actions throughout the film mirror this values, as she frequently feels pressured to adopt behaviors that she thinks will elevate her status, even if they don't align with her authentic self.



Picture 18



Picture 19

Pictures 18-19. Downgrade Transformation
(*Lady Bird*, 2017, 00:52:43 – 00:53:07)

The two pictures above show a clear example of *Lady Bird* trying to act rebellious in order to shape a new identity. In Picture 18, she is seen standing in front of a convenience store counter, asking for a pack of Camel Lights cigarettes.

The medium shot shows her full figure and surroundings, allowing the audience to focus on the action she's doing and the space she's in. The setting looks very ordinary and realistic, with natural lighting from the window behind her. This kind of framing makes the scene feel casual, as if what she is doing—buying cigarettes—is something normal, even though it is not a usual thing for a high school girl to do. In Picture 19, the camera moves closer in a medium close-up, showing Lady Bird outside, leaning against a blank wall while reading an adult magazine and smoking. The lighting is neutral, with no dramatic effects, and the background is plain, which draws full attention to what she is doing. She is still in her school uniform, which contrasts with the adult materials in her hand and highlights the difference between who she is and who she's trying to become.

This scene connects with the idea of motivational hedonism through the lens of peer pressure and identity formation. As Milner (2004) explains, teenagers often do things to gain social approval from others their age, and they are likely to follow trends or behaviors that make them feel accepted or admired. Lady Bird, in this case, is clearly trying to act like someone she thinks is cool or independent. She is not smoking or reading the magazine for her own deep interest, but because these actions help her build the image she wants other people to see. By doing this, Lady Bird is hoping to receive attention and be treated like an adult, even if it doesn't truly reflect who she is. This supports the idea that her actions are motivated by the desire to gain pleasure through acceptance, popularity, and validation from her peers, which are all forms of hedonistic pursuit.

4.2.2.3. Consumerism as Pleasure Seeking Behavior

In the book, Milner emphasizes how consumer products became symbols of social status for teenagers. High-status teens often had access to more expensive or desirable goods, and these items became markers of their popularity and success. On the other hand, students who couldn't afford these status symbols or who chose not to follow trends were often seen as "outsiders." (2004: 135-137). This created a culture where teens were pressured to participate in consumerism to be socially accepted.

Just like what happened to Lady Bird, where she was actually an outcast of the society with so little friend only because her family financial status is not as good as other. Her family struggles financially, and much of her dissatisfaction comes from comparing her life to that of her wealthier classmates. She envies their houses, cars, cellphones, and the privileges that come with economic stability, which reflects the consumerism Milner describes, where social status is linked to material wealth and possessions.



Picture 20. The Dream House
(Lady Bird, 2017, 00:06:43 – 00:06:58)



Picture 21. Her Parent's Number
(Lady Bird, 2017, 00:43:20 – 00:43:26)

In Picture 20, the camera uses a wide shot that captures Lady Bird and Julie standing in front of a large, elegant house. The house dominates the frame, placed

symmetrically in the center with clean, bold colors and neat architecture. Both girls are small in comparison, shown from behind as they silently stare at the house. The lighting is soft and natural, creating a sense of calmness and distance between them and the house. Their stillness, combined with the framing, suggests longing—something they are not part of, only looking at from the outside. This visual setup clearly emphasizes the gap between their current life and the lifestyle they wish they had. The house becomes a symbol of wealth and ideal living. In Milner's view, consumer goods like houses are more than just physical structures; they represent social identity. For teenagers, especially, expensive homes become markers of popularity, success, and higher status. Lady Bird's desire to live in this house shows how deeply she is affected by this system—how consumerism shapes her idea of what a good life looks like. Her wish to belong to that world is not just about comfort, but also about being seen and accepted.

In Picture 21, the camera uses a medium close-up that focuses on Lady Bird giving her crush a phone number. Her face is slightly turned down, and her voice, as shown by the subtitle, reveals that the number is not hers—it's her parents'. The lighting here is neutral and soft, showing a casual schoolyard moment, but the framing emphasizes the small and personal nature of the exchange. The fact that Lady Bird doesn't have a cellphone—while someone like him likely does—creates a subtle but clear sign of economic difference. In Milner's analysis, having consumer items like phones is part of what makes teenagers feel included in their social groups. Those who lack these items are seen as different, sometimes even as "outsiders." This scene illustrates how not having a personal phone sets Lady Bird

apart from her peers. It's not just about convenience—it's about image, access, and belonging. Her economic situation limits her ability to participate in the consumer habits that define teenage social life. Just like with the dream house, this moment shows how social identity and status in her environment are closely tied to what people can afford.