

## HEDONISM AS REFLECTED IN HEMINGWAY'S *THE SNOWS OF KILIMANJARO*

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### Abstract

This research deals with the hedonism in *The Snows of Kilimanjaro* short story by Ernest Hemingway. The writers use hedonism as the main theory to analyze because the problems of this short story are related to luxurious lifestyle and temporary happiness. The objectives are to find the hedonism values and the influence of hedonism from the main character of the short story, which the writer wants to convey to the reader. The study was conducted by applying qualitative research. Data that uses this study are primary data were reached from *The Snows of Kilimajaro* short story. 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 short story, it was found one of hedonism value which is materialism. The influence of hedonism can be seen by the main character Harry descriptions with the the cases of a narration and dialogues, the writer concludes some influence of hedonism that have a bad behaviour and personalities to the readers which is alcoholics drinks becomes a part of lifetyle. The other reason hedonism portrayed by the main character are found from their own surroundings such as social condition or environments even it comes from themselves.

**Keywords:** hedonism, materialism, lifetyle

### Introduction

Literature is a part of our life, it has an important role in our society, culture, and civilization development, moreover, literature present life which may happen in our social realities include the whole aspects of human activities expressing any feelings, emotions, thoughts and ideas. Literary work is an important subject to study because it reproduces or recreates life through words or language (Kennedy, 1993, p. 17). Literature as a human creation has characteristic, original, and 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 a 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 support with the opinion of Klarer, (2004) said that literary works or fiction 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.

According to Culler (1997, p. 20) there are three literary genres namely prose, poems, and drama. In this case, the writer takes prose in the form of short story entitled *The Snow of Kilimajaro* as the object of analysis because short story is a kind of literary work that presenting many kinds value and view. Authors use the short story based on the daily experiences of human in their life such as about power, love, or death. It can be said that literature is important for

human being because it becomes the reflection of human being especially in the way they live their life.

Some authors sometimes do not deliver the message of the story directly. Therefore, it is important to analyze elements of the story in order to understand the meaning or the message. There are two elements of the short story that are usually being discussed, which are the intrinsic element and extrinsic element. Intrinsic element is the element of literary work that build up the structure of literary work itself such as theme, characters, characterization, setting, plot and point of view. Meanwhile, extrinsic element is the element of literary work which comes from the outside to influence the story such as historical background, cultural background, and social background. This research discusses the extrinsic element about the social background in a short story, titled *The Snows of Kilimajaro*.

*The Snows of Kilimajaro* is a short story written by Ernest Miller Hemingway. It published in 1936. The socio-cultural background of the short story takes an important role to this story. It happens in 1930s after the First World War in America. The story mostly described about the condition of American society after First World War because during the war Hemingway become a volunteer. America in 1930s is described with the modernity, materialism, and the loss of moral values. The conditions of the society influence the lifestyle of the characters. After the First World War, everything is different in the way they live.

It is happen in the characters namely Harry and Helen. They tend to struggle to live with the misery and sorrow. Harry as the main character fought hard to rise from misery after the First World War. He was a writer but he never produced a literary work. He was too focused on getting out after the war. He met a woman namely Helen, she is a widow who has two children. Her husband had died when she was still a comparatively

young woman and her children were killed in a plane crash. Harry is very lucky because he can marry a widow from a wealthy family. Harry married to Helen not just because he loves Helen, but he just wants something that Helen has, that is money. He no longer has to work hard to earn money and pleasure. He considers wealth and money the most important thing for the source of happiness. With money he can have whatever he wants. This is very likely to happen in society, especially for those living in post-war times. After the world war ends, they feel the big changes and really enjoy living in prosperity. They always try to reach their happiness and avoid pain. The way they live their life can be said as hedonism. In common language, hedonism has come to mean devotion to pleasure as a way of life, especially to the pleasures of the sense. Therefore, this culture gives an impact to the characters in the short story *The Snows of Kilimajaro*. In the story they influenced by the social condition after First World War. This research discuss about Harry and Helen as the main character who tries to do anything to reach his happiness and assume that happiness and material things are the goals of life. Therefore, this fact is really interesting to be discussed in further explanation.

### 1. Sociological Approach

Sociological approach is more concerned an individuals and their relationship with society, like cultural, economical or political aspect. Kennedy (1995, p. 1790) stated, “Sociological approach is sociological criticism literature in the cultural, economical, and political context in which it is written or received”. Literature performs a picture of life. Life itself is a social reality. It means, the social reality is also including the relation intersociety. Intersociety and individual, including author which occurs in author’s mind. Sociology of literature is a branch study of literary works, which is looking at literary work as its relation to the social reality, author, and literary creating process,

and also the reader of its work (Welleck, 1978, p. 29).

Watt (2001, p. 102) states that “Sociology and literature share the same problems. As well as sociology, literature is also dealing with human beings in society as human beings try to fit in an attempt to change society.”. Thus, the literary work can be regarded as an attempt to recreate the social world of human relationships with family, environmental, political, state, economy, and so is also a matter of sociology. Laurenson and Swingwood in Endraswara (2003, p. 78) said that although sociology and literature have certain differences, but it may provide an explanation of the meaning of literary texts. So, the main focus of sociology of literature is a literary work itself and its relation to the society where the work produced. Based on the definition above, the writer concluded that sociological approach is one type of literary criticism which examines literature in the cultural, economic and political context. And literature is the expression of human life is not separated from the roots of society.

## 2. Hedonism

The word hedonism comes from Greek word “hedone” which means pleasure. Hedonism is the general term for those theories that regard happiness or pleasure as the supreme end of life. As stated by Michael (2012) hedonistic theories identify pleasure and pain as the only important elements of whatever phenomena they are designed to describe. According to Veenhoven (2003) hedonism refers to the way of life, characterized by openness to pleasurable experience. Hedonism is also a kind of values in the moral that appreciated of enjoyment. As stated by Schwartz (2006), human thinks what is important to them in their lives and it can be said as values. Values are a motivational construct which makes human tries to get the desirable goal in their life. The famous researcher who divided hedonism is Daniel Michael Weijers.

His work Weijers’s Seven Theories which is very famous. The six categories of hedonism are as follows:

## 3. Folk Hedonism

The meaning of the term hedonism in modern literature by non- philosophers is different from the meaning in the discussion of philosophers. In the modern literature, non-philosophers tend to think that hedonist is a person who looks for pleasure for themselves without giving any attention to their own future or to the others. According to non-philosophers, hedonist is someone who always takes an opportunity to get the pleasures of sex, drugs, and even if it brings them to some problems such as the relationship and health problems for themselves or other. Meanwhile, the philosophers used the term folk hedonism to this hedonism understanding.

## 4. Value and Prudential Hedonism

When discussing hedonism, the philosophers tend to argue that hedonism is about value, and the more specific theory, hedonism is about well-being. Hedonism as a theory about value holds that all and only pleasure is intrinsically valuable and only pain is intrinsically invaluable. The term "intrinsically" is an important part of the definition and is best understood in contrast to the term "instrumentally." When it is intrinsically valuable, it means that it is only for its own sake. Pleasure is thought to be intrinsically valuable because, even if it does not lead to any other benefit, it is still be good to experience. Money is an example of an instrumental good where its value for us comes from what we can do with it or what we can buy with it. Value hedonism reduces everything of value to pleasure. For the example is a value hedonist explains the instrumental value of money by describing how the things we can buy with money, such as food, cars, and houses which bring us pleasure or help us to avoid pain. Hedonism as a theory about well-being is more specific than value hedonism because it determines

the function of the value. It is said that all and only pleasure intrinsically makes people's lives go better for them and only pain intrinsically makes their lives go worse for them. When prudential hedonists claim that happiness is what they value most, they intend happiness to be understood as a big amount of pleasure over pain. The difference between prudential hedonism and folk hedonism is that prudential hedonists usually understand that looking for pleasure and avoiding pain in the very short-term is not always the best strategy for achieving the best long-term balance of pleasure over pain.

### 5. Motivational Hedonism

Motivational Hedonism is the theory that the desires to get pleasure and to avoid pain become our behavior. Most accounts of motivational hedonism argue that the desires to seek pleasure and avoid pain often or always have some influence on our behavior. On the contrary, philosophers argue that all behavior is governed by the desires to encounter pleasure and to avoid pain.

### 6. Normative Hedonism

Value hedonism, occasionally with assistance from motivational hedonism, has been used to argue for specific theories of right action. It explains that happiness should be pursued and pain should be avoided which is referred to normative hedonism and sometimes ethical hedonism. There are two major types of normative hedonism, hedonistic egoism and hedonistic utilitarianism. Both types commonly use happiness as the only criterion for determining the moral rightness or wrongness of an action.

### 7. Hedonistic Egoism

Hedonistic egoism is a hedonistic version of egoism, the theory that we should do whatever based on our own interests. This theory argues that we have to do whatever that makes us happiest. The worst thing of this theory is that it will never think about the consequences. For example, a hedonistic

egoist who did not feel saddened by theft would be morally required to steal and even from poor people. The defenders of hedonistic egoism often point out that performing acts of theft or murder would not make them happier overall because of the guilt, the fear of being caught, and the chance of being caught and punished. They tend to surrender, however, when it is pointed out that a hedonistic egoist is morally obliged by their own theory to pursue an unusual kind of practical education; a brief and possibly painful training period that reduces their moral emotions of sympathy and guilt.

### 8. Hedonistic Utilitarianism

Hedonistic utilitarianism is the theory that the right action is the one that produces the greatest happiness for all concerned. Hedonistic utilitarianism is often considered fairer than hedonistic egoism because it brings the happiness for everyone. Hedonistic utilitarian does not steal from poor people because it usually leaves the poor people far less happy and the thief only slightly happier.

### Methodology

This research used qualitative research method. According to Blaxter (1996, p. 89) "Research can also be qualitative, that is it can describe events persons, and so forth scientifically without the use of numerical data". In qualitative research, the aim is to provide our perspective and study in words and other actions, such as making interpretation, description or observation. In addition, Blaxter argues that qualitative data is based on a research that focuses on understanding and meaning through verbal narratives and descriptions rather than numbers (1996, p. 91). Data are the information or facts that are taken from data source which are related with the topic. According to Kothari (2004, p. 2), "Data is information that has been translated into a form that is more convenient to move or process". Therefore, the data is this research



in the form of dialogues of character and narrations taken from short story entitled *The Snows of Kilimanjaro*. Furthermore, data source can be defined as a person, a book, a piece written work and document that provide (Fred, 2005, p. 131). Hence, the data source can be defined as something or someone that considers as the source of information. Thus, data source of this research is short story entitled *The Snows of Kilimanjaro* that published in 1936 by Ernest Hemingway. In this research, the writer uses the information from the short story of Ernest Hemingway's *The Snows of Kilimanjaro* as the primary data. The primary data includes the dialogues or sentences which are used as the proof of the analysis. To support the primary data the writes uses the secondary data which are taken from some information in the references, such as taken from the books about Hedonism, papers, journals, websites and articles.

### Findings and Discussion

Hedonism is the general term for those theories that regard happiness or pleasure as the supreme end of life. As stated by Michael (2012) hedonistic theories identify pleasure and pain as the only important elements of whatever phenomena they are designed to describe. Meanwhile according to Schwartz (2006), human thinks what is important to them in their lives and it can be said as values. Values are a motivational construct which makes human tries to get the desirable goal in their life. Hedonism is a value of life which argues that material pleasure and enjoyment are the main goals of life. People who do hedonism assume that the main goal of life is all about having fun, whether it is fun for the others or not.

#### 1. Folk Hedonism

Folk Hedonism is the type of hedonism which argues that people have to reach their happiness without thinking about their future or other people (Weijers, 2012). They will only think about their own

happiness. There are some facts found in this novel. The first fact is about Harry and Helen's relationship. They are a married couple, but Harry often tries to hurt Helen, as evidenced by this statement "You bitch, you rich bitch!" (P. 49). From the statement shows that Harry tries to insult Helen even though she is his wife. He does not care what he has to say, as long as it makes him happy he will do it. He only thinks pleasure for himself without thinking to others. In the era after First World War, people forgot their moral value. They did not think the effect of what they did for their future. They just think about their happiness at that time and pretend that there is nothing happened. Helen is Harry's wife, as a husband Harry should keep his attitude towards Helen. Do not let what he does, what he says can hurt others, especially his own wife. The second fact is people at that time love to drink whiskey. They assume that by drinking whiskey will give their own satisfaction, but they do not care about the consequences if drink whiskey too much. Both characters in this story love to drink whiskey, as evidenced in this statement:

"What about a drink?"

"It's supposed to be bad for you. It said in Black's to avoid all alcohol. You shouldn't drink."

"Molo!"

"Bring whiskey-soda"

"Yes Bwana"

"You shouldn't. That's what I mean by giving up. It says it's bad for you. I know it's bad for you."

"No. It's good for me." (p. 47)

From the statement above it shows that Harry asks his maid to bring whiskey for him. He likes to drink whiskey in many situations, even though his wife forbade him to drink. He does not care what his wife says. He thinks that by drinking whiskey will give him own satisfaction and pleasure. Not only Harry likes to drink whiskey, but also Helen, as evidenced in this statement:

"Should we have a drink?"

"Do you think you should?"

“I’m having one.”  
 “We’ll have one together. Molo, letti dui whiskey-soda (p. 52)”

From the statement above it shows that Harry and Helen often spend their time together to drink whiskey. They make drinking whiskey as one of their habit. Almost every day they drink whiskey, “And she drank Scotch and soda while she read. By dinner she was fairly drunk and after a bottle of wine at dinner she was usually drunk enough to sleep” (p. 51). From the statement it shows that almost every time they drink whiskey, but they do not think about the impact if they drink whiskey too much. Something done excessively will bring a bad impact for them. As explained in Folk Hedonism that people are only concerned with getting pleasure and satisfaction for a moment, but they do not think about their future. If Harry and Helen continue to drink whiskey excessively, it will have a negative impact on their health.

## 2. Motivational Hedonism

Motivational Hedonism also can be found in this novel. It has a meaning that behavior is created by desire to get happiness and avoid pain. The action will be a behavior when it is done continuously. The fact is found in this statement “It was strange, too, wasn’t it, when he fell in love with another woman, that woman should always have more money than the last one” (p. 50). From this statement it shows that when Harry seeks a woman to be his couple, the woman must have more money than before. He is more concerned with money rather than love, because he thinks that he will be happy as long as his couple is rich. Therefore, he marries rich people as his motivation to get happiness and avoid pain. Another fact can be seen from this statement “Your damned money was my armour. My Swift and my Armour” (p. 49). From this statement it shows that Harry considers money as everything. He tries to do anything to get money. He married Helen who comes from a wealthy family. He had certain intent when

he married Helen, that money was his last goal.

## 3. The effect of Hedonism towards character’s life

Harry has an ability in writing, he once produced a work that everyone likes to read. Since his life has changed, he has not used that ability properly. He adorns the talent he has. He only focuses to seek pleasure and satisfaction, without thinking for his life in the future.

“He had destroyed his talent by not using it, by betrayals of himself and what he believed in, by drinking so much that he blunted the edge of his perceptions, by laziness, by sloth, and by snobbery, by pride and by prejudice, by hook and crook” (p. 50).

From this statement it shows it that Harry's habit of seeking pleasure and satisfaction has an impact on his inability to control himself. He is too focused on finding his own pleasure, but he does not care what he has. If he is able to float his talents, he will get better pleasure and satisfaction in his life. He is too focused on seeking pleasure from his bad habits of finding rich women, drinking alcohol and gambling.

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