

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Crazy Rich Asians is a romantic comedy film based on the 2013 best-selling Kevin Kwan novel. This 2018 American romantic comedy film was directed by one of the most popular directors from the United States, Jonathan Murray Chu, known as Jon M. Chu. He was born on November 2, 1979, in California as a Chinese immigrant and he was raised in San Francisco. He developed his filmmaking skills at the University of Southern California. Then, he began his literary career by making his directing debut with *Step Up 2*, continued with his music-themed project collaborate with Justin Bieber known as *Never Say Never* and the web series *The Legion of Extra Dancer Dancers* and *Now You See Me 2*. Later, Chu directed *Crazy Rich Asians*, 2018 American romantic comedy-drama (Sio, 2018, p. 1).

On the level of entertainment industry standards, *Crazy Rich Asians* is a homerun, grossing over \$230 million (on a \$30 million budget) as of October 2018, making it the most successful romantic comedy movie in the last 10 years and the sixth-most successful of all time, according to MSN Entertainment.

In the world of cinema, *Crazy Rich Asians* is a successful and popular film. It made more than \$ 230 million (with a budget of \$ 30 million) in October 2018. Not only that, but this film is also the most successful romantic comedy in the last 10 years and the sixth most successful of all time, according to MSN Entertainment (Le & Kang, 2019, p. 525).

Crazy Rich Asian is a film that shows the hedonic life of the main character and supporting characters. A life wrapped in luxury is highlighted in this film. Hedonism is a view states that pleasure is the purpose of life. Every human who lives is only pursuing excessive knowing pleasures (Veenh Moven, 2003, p. 1). Hedonists can be represented in a wide perspective because they can relate to what they buy, what they eat, what they do, what they wear, and much more (Weijers, 2012, p. 39).

This film is about the relationship between Nick Young and Rachel Chu. Both of them are professors in America. But, they come from different backgrounds. Initially, Rachel did not realize that her boyfriend was a very wealthy professor until she travels to the hometown of her boyfriend. They come to Singapore to attend a party and meet Nick's families at a time. The trip was a surprise to Rachel when she found out Nick was a very wealthy professor. Rachel began to find out and ask for help from her friend in college Peik Lin who lives in Singapore to find out who Nick's family is and how to deal with them.

As a film, *Crazy Rich Asian* is a famous and interesting film released on September 11, 2018 (Le & Kang, 2019, p. 524). The touch of history, culture, language, and lives of Chinese people makes this film interesting. This film also describes the meaning of courage, hard work, and love. The story of this film may happen to anyone who lives in the modern era. There was a controversy when *Crazy Rich Asian* was released because this is the first film by a Hollywood studio with an Asian actor since 'The Joy Luck Club' in 1993. Most people, especially Americans, question whether Asian perceptions in the film reflect Asian

perceptions, or just a fiction (Sio, 2018, p. 2). This film also criticizes how luxury and lifestyle hedonism is portrayed in the story.

The hedonistic lifestyle is shown by Nick's friends and family. They can spend thousands of dollars on a dress, a luxury building, or rent a private island without thinking about the bachelor party. This makes the film show a variety of spectacular clothing at parties and dinners. The luxurious house of Nick's grandmother also shows luxury, even some of the furniture in this house is made of gold.

Rachel's presence was not accepted by Nick's family. Although Rachel Chu is a smart, kind, and humble person, they could not accept Rachel Chu because they regard that Rachel Chu as not equal with their family. After all, she comes from a different race, Nick is a Chinese originally while Rachel Chu is a Chinese-American descent. Everything becomes more complicated when Nick's mother seems to disagree with Rachel's presence. Nick only can choose one, his family, or Rachel.

Nick made all the high-class single women in Singapore adore him because he is handsome, smart, and wealthy. The conflict was created when a millionaire woman knew of Rachel Chu. She took a picture of Nick and Rachel Chu when they were having lunch at a cafe and spread it to the upper-class people. Then, the upper-class people tried to degrade Rachel Chu.

A hedonistic lifestyle might happen around everyone who lives in the modern world. It happens because the hedonic lifestyle that exists in a society usually gives negative impacts on society. Hedonic lifestyle emphasizes luxury things to fulfill hedonist desires. Whatever, hedonists do it related to spending high

expenses. A hedonic lifestyle is no longer an option for them but it has become a necessity for them. This condition is reflected by the director through *Crazy Rich Asians*.

I chose this film because it reflects the hedonic lifestyle of the characters. Watching this film has motivated me to examine more deeply about the hedonic lifestyle through the film *Crazy Rich Asians*. This thesis describes the social conditions that happened in the society and the hedonic lifestyle in *Crazy Rich Asian* films. This is a social condition in which people waste their money to get satisfaction, I use a sociological approach to analyze the film. I would like to explore more information about cases of hedonism. I will use the Hedonism characteristic to know about the social condition in the film. I will also use hedonism factors and impact theory to analyze this film.

1.2. FIELD OF THE STUDY

The Field of this study is in literature, especially film.

1.3. SCOPE OF THE STUDY

To analyze my thesis, I will use the hedonism characteristics, which consist of factors and impacts of hedonism. The scope of this study is the hedonic lifestyle shown by the characters that I focus on. They are Peik Lin, Astrid, and Eleanor.

1.4. PROBLEM FORMULATIONS

1. What are the factors contributing to the hedonic lifestyle in *Crazy Rich Asians*?

2. What are the impacts of hedonic lifestyle on Peik Lin, Astrid, and Eleanor in *Crazy Rich Asians*?

1.5. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objectives of the study in this research are:

1. To describe the factors of the hedonic lifestyle portrayed in some characters in *Crazy Rich Asians*.
2. To describe the impacts of the hedonic lifestyle portrayed in Peik Lin, Astrid, and Eleanor in *Crazy Rich Asians*.

1.6. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This work on *Crazy Rich Asians* is significant to do because it allows me to put to practice the theories learned in Literary Criticism and Film Studies. I hope this research could help readers know more about the Hedonism theory. The result of this thesis is expected to be a useful reference about a hedonic lifestyle and to increase readers' social awareness of the hedonic lifestyle that is portrayed in this film. By reading this thesis, the reader will better understand the meanings of hedonism, the characteristics of hedonism, factors of hedonism, and the effects of hedonism. By understanding the negative effects of a hedonistic lifestyle, we can stay away from it and be free from negative consequences. This motivates the other researchers to do other research in connection with the hedonic lifestyle for human development in literary work.

1.7. DEFINITION OF TERMS

1. Hedonism

Hedonism is a way of life that believes that everyone will be happy by seeking happiness by avoiding painful feelings as much as possible. Hedonism is a

view or doctrine that pleasure is the goal of every human life. Hedonism is a view of life that pursues worldly pleasures (Seligman & Royzman, 2003, p. 1-4).

2. Lifestyle

Lifestyle is very close to everyday life. According to Farhud (2015, p. 1442) lifestyle is defined as the way used by individuals, crowds, and populations and formed in “specific geographical, economic, political, cultural and religious fields”. Lifestyle refers to the characteristics of the citizens of an area at a certain time and place. This includes “daily behavior and individual roles in work, activities, and pleasure.

3. Desire

Desire describes how happiness is about how the individual gets what he. The desire usually differs from one individual to another. It is considered hedonism when what we want is lots of pleasure and little pain. However, hedonism and desire theory often become one entity. “Hedonism holds that the preponderance of pleasure over pain is the recipe for happiness even if this is not what one desires most” (Seligman & Royzman, 2003, p. 2).

4. Socialite

A socialite is a person who attends many fashionable upper-class social events and who is famous because of this. The meaning of socialite can be interpreted from the results of interactions by a person with his or her social environment. To become a socialite, a person must be known by many people with high social status. There are individual interests in the form of business and some group associations such as social gathering. Socialites usually want to be someone

who influences others. Socialite physical characteristics are often seen with the appearance of elegant clothing with diamonds. The experience of being a socialite is often by attending party events, launching luxury brands, and guest stars at event parties. Besides, it makes an organization that aims to contribute to the social environment. A socialite lives a luxurious lifestyle to get recognition from the community that they have wealth or power (Yusara & Masykur, 2016, p. 611)

