



Hedonism on the Shifting Ideas of the Characters in The Film *The Tinder Swindler* and *The Great Gatsby*: A Comparative Study

Putri Yusuf¹ , Nasrum^{*2} , Dahlan³

^{1,2,3} Universitas Islam Negeri Alauddin, Makassar, 92113, Indonesia

*Corresponding Author: nasrum.marjuni@uin-alauddin.ac.id

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ABSTRACT

*This study compares the representation of hedonism and the shift in thinking of characters in the films *The Tinder Swindler* (2022) and *The Great Gatsby* (2013). This study uses a qualitative descriptive method using the theory of hedonism by Epicurus (341-270 BC) as the basis for analysis. This study found that in *The Tinder Swindler*, hedonism is used as a tool of manipulation in the digital era, while in *The Great Gatsby*, hedonism reflects the search for happiness that ends tragically. Simon Leviev's character does not experience a change in thinking, still holding on to his hedonistic life principles even though he is caught, while Jay Gatsby experiences the realization that wealth cannot repeat the past. A comparison of social contexts shows that *The Tinder Swindler* reflects the culture of imagery on social media, while *The Great Gatsby* reflects the excesses of capitalism in the Roaring Twenties era. The conclusion of this study emphasizes that excessive hedonism can lead to destruction, both in the modern world and in a historical context. This study reminds us that the search for happiness through material things often ends in emptiness. Thus, this study reveals that not all forms of hedonism lead to true happiness, especially when based on the illusion of wealth and social image.*

Keyword: Hedonism, Shift in Thinking, Comparative Study, Movie



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1. Introduction

Most people have hedonism in their lives nowadays, many people actually know about hedonism but don't realize that they have fallen into the trap of a hedonistic lifestyle. The condition of hedonism is often found in society, which does not only occur in the lives of students and young people, it seems to have spread to all levels in various circles of society. Initially, this lifestyle was only carried out by most people with money who always paid attention to external appearance and enjoyed according to their wishes or followed existing trends. We know that everyone's lifestyle is different, there are those who have a simple lifestyle because it is more comfortable, but there are also those who prefer a luxurious lifestyle.

Hedonism is a concept popularized by the philosopher Epicurus (341-279 BC), which considers pleasure and material enjoyment to be the most important goal in life. According to Salam (1977), hedonism is the idea that something is good based on the pleasure it brings (Pound, 2021). The general facts meaning behind this hedonism is a great desire to gain happiness. Hedonism is defined by Salam (1977: 81) as "something that is regarded as good, based on the happiness that it causes." Put otherwise, everything that exclusively causes problems, misery, or unpleasantness is viewed as bad. Meanwhile, according to Gem (1993), "hedonism is a doctrine which states that pleasure is the most important thing in life, or hedonism is an understanding held by people who seek the pleasure of life solely". Living by following the principles of

hedonism means living a life that prioritizes the level of enjoyment by considering tranquility. Every person has the right to determine the level of enjoyment of his life but must be able to limit that enjoyment so that it does not harm him. Epicurus stated that a good level of happiness and pleasure is a natural level in a simple lifestyle. Contrary to the Cyrenaics who taught that a good life is by increasing sensory happiness and intellectual happiness. The meaning of hedonism has changed over time. At this stage, the understanding of hedonism is very different from Epicurus' ethical understanding of hedonism. Today's hedonism is equated with the importance of luxury, lifestyle, extravagance and consumerist tendencies. The principle of hedonism does not only apply to young people, but also to adults and the elderly, especially social communities, which are always presented as the meaning of a hedonistic lifestyle (Sudarsih, 2011). Hedonism is the belief that happiness and pleasure should be the main goal of a person's life and behavior. Hedonism is a view that holds that the main goal of life is the pursuit of material pleasure and satisfaction. Hedonism is the belief that as long as humans pursue happiness and avoid suffering, then they will all be happy.

Film itself is defined as a communication medium that not only provides entertainment, but also provides information, and can even touch the audience's feelings so that they are able to express emotions. Currently, many films have become one of the most popular arts. Films have an effect on society because they can create imaginations, sayings, joy, truth and emotions as if the audience is experiencing and participating in them. Sometimes films embody all the realities of past, present and future social life so that the audience can receive the message. According to Effendy (1986: 239), film is characterized as both an artistic medium and a cultural product. Film, as a medium for public communication, combines a number of technologies, including photography, sound recording, music, literature, theatre, painting, and fine and applied arts (Dewi et al., 2022).

Just like in the films *The Tinder Swindler* and *The Great Gatsby*, there are several things that can cause emotional feelings for the audiences. Not infrequently in films there is hedonism, in this film there is hedonism in one of the characters which is very interesting to discuss. This method of influencing film is very powerful because it can be used as a teaching tool to provide insight and experience that is very beneficial for the development of life and ways of thinking.

So, in this study the researchers focused on how the idea of hedonism shifts in the films *The Tinder Swindler* and *The Great Gatsby*. Where hedonism, apart from being defined as boasting, is the true goal of life, according to Epicurus, hedonism is a life that prioritizes the level of enjoyment by taking into account tranquility. A good level of happiness and calm is in a simple and sufficient pattern. Therefore, hedonism is important to study because there are still very few people who admit that they are also hedonists. This study can help the public understand the meaning of hedonism which is currently prevalent in society, especially among teenagers, as well as provide education about the phenomenon of hedonism so that society can be wiser in responding to this phenomenon, including the shift in the idea of hedonism. So, in this study, why focus on the films *The Tinder Swindler* and *The Great Gatsby* because in these two films there is a shift in hedonism by looking at the comparison of hedonism between new year's films and old year's films.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Structuralism

Structuralism theory views the concept of function as playing a role important. The elements that characterize this theory can be play a maximum role with the function, namely in the framework shows the interrelationships of the elements which are involved. It could be said that the structure is more than simply understanding language as a medium, a work literature is more than the sum of forms and its contents. Elements have different functions, their dominance depends on type, convention, and its literary tradition (Ratna, 2015).

As stated in section the theoretical framework of hedonism is said to be that hedonism is a view, lifestyle, culture about how a person or a group of people trying to catch up, live and enjoy pleasure according to what he wants. Pleasure is their life goal. Anything is done for can grasp or achieve pleasure. With conditions like this give rise to a variety of less common conditions in in society. Hedonists (perpetrators of hedonism) considered excessive for what he did. Nevertheless, hedonism –with a slogan achieve his pleasure– can be a driving force or motivator to achieve noble goals. Because that's in hedonism there are those who see it as negative hedonism and positive hedonism (see Arifin, 2003; Bertens, 2013; Brax, 2009; Dewojati, 2010; Kunzmann et al., 2005; Veenhoven, 2003; Weijers, 2012). The stereotypical hedonist is someone who never passes up the chance to enjoy the delights of drugs, sex, and rock 'n' roll, even if such pastimes or pleasures lead to regret, melancholy, or other problems for themselves or others (Weijers, 2012: 16-17). Even in the absence of any other advantages, pleasure is valued because it is a valuable experience. Money serves as an example of a useful tool for pleasure; its value to us is determined by what we can accomplish with it (what

we got buy with it). Hedonistic behavior value deducts everything except enjoyment. For instance, value hedonism will describe how money is used to acquire goods like food, housing, and other necessities and how these things indicate our status, bring us joy, or keep us from suffering (Weijers, 2012:17). According to Weijers (2012), the term hedonism comes from the Greek word “hedonism” which means for pleasure. This term refers to how we should behave, how to avoid the bad in order to get the good, and what motivates us. Although the meaning of hedonism is for pleasure, the theory also identifies pleasure and pain as the only important elements of any phenomenon they are designed to describe. According to Weijers (2012) there are six types of hedonism, namely (1) Folk Hedonism, (2) Value and Prudential Hedonism, (3) Motivational Hedonism, (4) Normative Hedonism, (5) Hedonism of Egoist, (6) Utilitarianism Hedonistic. (Weijers, 2012).

Blackburn (2005) and Pence (1997) both severely restrict hedonism by characterizing it as a particular normative theory that, without addressing alternative forms of hedonism, maintains that the pursuit of our own pleasure should be the ultimate objective of all our actions. Hedonistic Egoism is the normative perspective on hedonism that challenges Hedonistic Utilitarianism (Moore & Shaw, 2005), which holds that an activity is ethically right if it helps to maximize net pleasure for all parties involved (Brink, 2006). Vesey & Foulkes (1990) adopt the opposite tack and solely address motivational hedonism and hedonistic utilitarianism in a similarly deceptive manner. It is sad that this is missing as it is obvious that Prudential Hedonism serves as the foundation for all significant forms of normative hedonism. An inexperienced reader could conclude from such a limited portrayal of hedonism that it is merely a normative theory, but this is untrue. Given the specific definitions of hedonism and, specifically, prudential hedonism, it is imperative that we really discuss whether or not happiness is the entirety of what makes our lives meaningful, given the ambiguity surrounding these concepts (Weijers, 2012).

Swastha (in Putri & Indrawati, 2016) said that characteristic of individuals who have style hedonistic life is: Likes to seek attention, Tend to be impulsive, Tend to be followers (follow along), Lack of rationality, and Easily influenced. Meanwhile, according to Susanto (in Martha, 2010) states that attribute stylistic tendencies hedonic living includes happier to spend free time at cafes, malls and restaurants ready-to-eat food (fast food) as well have a number of items with a prestigious brand.

From the definition above about hedonism, the writer can conclude that hedonism is a life full of enjoyment that prioritizes and upholds high happiness by considering serenity. By assuming that living hedonism is the most important goal. There is also the notion that happiness can only be obtained through worldly satisfaction where doing something without pursuing worldly satisfaction will only cause heartache.

2.2 Sociology of Literature

By definition, social influence is an attempt to change the attitudes, beliefs, perceptions or behavior of one or several other people (Cialdini, 1994 in Baron et al., 2008). The rules that regulate how we should behave are called social norms. Humans try to adapt to the environment in order to survive. The easiest way is to take appropriate and socially acceptable actions. Carrying out actions that conform to social norms in social psychology is known as conformity. Conformity is a form of social influence where individuals change their attitudes and behavior to conform to social norms (Baron, Branscombe, Byrne, 2008).

a. Compliance

Compliance is a form of social change where behavior is directly influenced by other people or is called wish fulfillment. An example of social influence in the form of compliance is, for example, a friend begs to be loaned money, when a salesperson offers the goods Movie, the behavior of prospective members asking to be chosen during the elections, requests for girlfriends to be picked up, etc. This request requires choosing two things, either rejecting it or confirming it.

b. Obedience

Our behavior in daily life is not just characterized by compliance and conformity, but also by obedience. One sort of social influence is obedience, in which an individual acquiesces to requests made by others to engage in particular behaviors due to the existence of authority. (Baron, Branscombe, and Bryne, 2008). A hedonistic lifestyle is one in which the pursuit of pleasure is the main activity. Examples of such activities include playing more, spending more time beyond the home, taking in the city's bustle, preferring to purchase pricey items that suit them, and constantly seeking attention. It is evident from the explanation above. In summary, a lifestyle can take many different forms, from one centered solely on pleasure through modeling from adored artists and the media to one based on beauty, requiring thought and accountability in one's behavioral habits (Putri, 2017).

2.3 Hedonism

The American Jazz Age, or “Roaring Twenties,” brings to mind images of feathers, flapper dancers, and glamour. As the 1920s were marked by a rapid expansion of the stock market, successful Americans spent more money, flaunted their wealth, and threw extravagant parties. Reminders of the era are inevitable, as it inspired the fashion, movies, and music of the day. F. Scott Fitzgerald’s 1925 novel *The Great Gatsby* captures the essence of the time and offers a paradigm of the jazz age. When Baz Luhrmann took on the challenge of adapting it into a film, it grossed \$353.6 million at the box office, as audiences were captivated by the romance of the period.

While the 1920s saw people fleeing the harsh and unpromising lives of the Great War, they also brought new changes and hardships with them. This new America had lost faith in its organization and structure, having become disillusioned by war and patriotism. Partying and indulgence reflected a newfound individualism as traditional values were abandoned. Many were critical of the more reckless lifestyles in the cities, as ideas about morality seemed to be shifting. Prohibition, the 1920s ban on alcohol, seemed to only encourage more drinking in dark bars, and organized crime and bribery were rampant. But the era was also marked by greater modernization and freedom, especially for women. The 19th Amendment was amended in 1920, giving women the right to vote, and social changes occurred as women in the workplace became more the norm and gender roles were questioned. Even fashion became more liberating as skirts and short hair became popular.

The jazz music that fueled the parties of the rich and powerful in 1920s America first came from the African-American community in New Orleans and had its roots in the blues. With its freer, more improvisational style, it broke musical norms as social conventions were being dismantled in America. With improved recording of music during the mid-1920s, the new style spread rapidly, and radio broadcasting allowed for a more rapid popularization of the genre, as it reached people of all ages and classes. Although the US was still a place of deep-rooted racism and xenophobia, and many conservatives feared the influence of “devil’s music”, the popularity of jazz was a step towards greater inclusion in American society (Green & Palmer, 2018; Sarkin & Sarkin, 2024).

In Western societies, the 1920s were a decade of progress and reaction to years of trauma and deprivation caused by World War I and the 1918 flu epidemic. While many countries struggled with the aftermath of collapsing empires, revolutions, and the lingering effects of colonialism, the US and Europe enjoyed a period of unprecedented creativity and innovation. Cities grew at breakneck speed, mass production of the automobile transformed everyday life and urban planning, gender norms were challenged and racial prejudices were challenged. A thirst for a new life was quenched in the jazz-filled clubs of Montmartre and the decadent nightclubs of Berlin.

There’s no doubt that after a year and a half of being stuck indoors, many people today identify with the hedonism felt during that era, leading to speculation that post-Covid-19, some societies could enter a new “Roaring Twenties.” But people also identify with the post-war and post-pandemic awareness of the fragility of the world and the need to make it better.

2.4 Shifting

The development of the times offers a new way of life for human life. People’s lifestyles are influenced by developments in the era which are now synonymous with material luxury. This lifestyle is implicitly interpreted as hedonism, the principle that pleasure must be achieved so that a person always tries to fulfill his level of pleasure. The concept of hedonism has undergone many developments, Aristippos to Epicurus have different interpretations of levels of pleasure. Aristoppos stated that pleasure is only related to the physical. However, Epicurus denied that enjoyment or pleasure must include material or physical and spiritual.

Pioneers of the theory of hedonism in Greek times included Democritus, Aristoppos, Epicurus, Jeremy Bentham, and James Mill. Two famous philosophers were Aristoppos and Epicurus, Aristoppos had opposing opinions to Epicurus. According to Aristoppos, pleasure is the main thing sought in human life. He puts aside pain when he achieves pleasure. Pain is a natural thing to experience. Meanwhile, Epicurus considered that pleasure in life is when humans feel calm. It avoids the pain that individuals experience in interpreting pleasure. Everything must be in balance so that no pain is felt.

Epicurus stated that the best level of enjoyment is to consider tranquility. When the pleasure obtained brings peace then it is good, but when pleasure brings unrest then it is not good. Epicurus was a simple figure in his life. Epicurus had very good relationships with others, this can be seen when Epicurus was given pain, he was still able to show a sense of calm.

A person’s mental state changes automatically. If someone does good then he will get happiness, and if he does bad then he will get death. This also applies to other people’s sadness and emotions in life. Individuals

receive rewards according to their actions. When someone has achieved happiness, then he has no other needs, because happiness is the pinnacle of life.

Greek philosophers have divided hedonism into two large groups, namely pleasure and happiness. Philosophers believe that hedonism exists in two forms, namely: 1) psychological hedonism believes that humans naturally have something to think about and bring happiness. This form of hedonism is known as egoistic hedonism; 2) ethical hedonism believes that an individual should carry out behavior that can cause happiness.

Epicurean is another name for the ethical ideology of hedonism. The level of enjoyment does not only include the enjoyment felt by oneself (egoistic hedonism) but is also related to the enjoyment felt by many people (universal hedonism), and the existence of a psychological drive to obtain pleasure (psychological hedonism). In understanding hedonism, there are 2 concepts of virtue according to Epicurus, namely:

a. Peace of soul

According to Epicurus, the essence of pleasure must be based on peace of mind. When humans think about the enjoyment of life, the essence of their existence as God's creatures must not be ignored. This will encourage humans to understand its nature and limit their excessive enjoyment. Calm will not be achieved when humans are afraid of something. Epicurus stated that there are three aspects that can disturb human peace, namely fear of the gods, fear of death and fear of the future or fate, fear of gods; one should not assume that gods determine bad luck, because in essence gods have nothing to do with gods. Gods are only mediators, but cannot determine the good or bad fate of humans. Whether things are good or bad depends on the person himself.

Fear of death, everything in the universe experiences death. Death is not a negative thing because death is a painless process. If a human is still alive, it means that the human has not died and has the opportunity to enjoy life. When people die, people don't feel anything. Death is not pain. So, the fear of death is not worth thinking about. Wise people tend to accept death, they do not see death as the end of everything, but as an escape from the fatigue of life. A wise person does not look at the end result, but tries to improve the process. They are not afraid of death, but try to make their death more meaningful during their lives. Fearful of the future or fate, people lack the authority and ability to predict what will happen in the future. Epicurus advocates righteous living because the future cannot be determined. People just need to work hard today to make a good impact in the future. Sometimes people can change things by fighting for the good today.

b. Wisdom of Life

This learning can be seen from the habits of the Greeks, namely those who were devoted to wisdom. Epicurus stated that humans will feel happiness when they gain freedom of heart and freedom from fear and anxiety. Something that is delicious but does not bring peace is something that is best avoided. Man must understand the limits of pleasure, viz. respond to pleasure calmly, so that the pleasure has good consequences. People who seek pleasure, according to Epicurus, are different from people who are greedy. Every pain is followed by joy.

3. Method

This study used descriptive qualitative method. This method describes and explains data on the topic of hedonism contained in the both films by using Epicurus' theory as the theoretical framework. The aim of applying qualitative research is to collect more specific information and obtain more complete pictures and overall view. Primary data sources were used in this study from the films *The Tinder Swindler* and *The Great Gatsby* which were obtained through intermediaries such as journals and articles related to the application of Epicurus theory. The researchers used note taking as the research instrument. The researchers collected the data used recording sheet then marked and noted the parts that show part of the research object.

4. Results and Discussion

Results

4.1 Hedonism in Both Films

1) The Tinder Swindler 2022

The film shows how Simon Leviev uses an excessive life to deceive women. He creates an image of a fast and expensive life and relies heavily on social media to create a false identity as a rich

and powerful man. And their hedonism here can be related to luxury and consumer goods that seem to guarantee happiness and high social status.

After trust was established, he began to show his vulnerable side by pretending to be experiencing financial problems due to an enemy who was threatening him. Under the pretext that his credit cards were blocked for security reasons, he requested financial assistance from the victims. The victim's desire to help arose because they had been lured by the luxury he had previously displayed.

a. Simon to One of the Victims via Chat

"My enemies are after me. I need you to send me \$25,000 immediately. I promise I will return it next week. You know I would do the same for you, my love. You are my everything." (M 29:30)

In this scene, we can see how Simon uses the love and confidence he has built. He uses emotional words like "my love" and "you are my everything" to instill a sense of responsibility in the victims, as if they were part of his glamorous life. Manipulative techniques like this show how hedonism is not just the consumption of luxury goods, but is also a social tool that can be used to control other people.

b. Simon in an Interview about his Life

After his actions in *The Tinder Swindler* went viral, Simon still maintained his image as a successful person and did not feel guilty about his actions. He tried to build a narrative that he was just a misunderstood businessman and that his life of luxury was the result of his own hard work, not from fraud. In several interviews conducted after the documentary was released, Simon frequently denied the accusations and emphasized that he had not committed any crime. She described herself as a victim of the media and her ex-boyfriend who, she said, tried to destroy her reputation. This attitude shows how he still adheres to the principles of hedonism and maintains his lifestyle even though he faces public criticism.

"I am not a fraud or a fake. I never presented myself as someone I'm not. I was just living my life, and people chose to believe what they wanted to believe. What's wrong with enjoying a good life?" (M 01:34:10)

In this quote, Simon tries to justify his actions by shifting responsibility to someone else. He emphasized that he was not cheating, but was just living life according to his own way. Statements like this show how he still maintains his hedonistic thinking, where personal happiness and enjoyment takes precedence over moral or legal consequences.

2) *The Great Gatsby* 2013

Gatsby lives with big dreams about happiness that can be achieved through wealth, but in the end, he finds that all the luxury does not bring true happiness. On the other hand, other characters, such as Tom Buchanan and Daisy, also depict hedonism that focuses on material satisfaction and social status.

Jay Gatsby was known for his lavish parties held almost every night at his stately home in West Egg. These parties were filled with abundant drinking, jazz music, and guests from all walks of life who often did not know Gatsby personally. For many guests, the party was simply a chance to enjoy a glamorous life without consequences.

a. Gatsby on His Parties

The parties in *The Great Gatsby* depict the hedonistic lifestyle of high society in the Roaring Twenties. People indulged in luxury, dancing, and drinking without concern for moral or social consequences. Hedonism in this context is not only about personal enjoyment, but also a symbol of the falsehood and dissatisfaction of life.

Guests arrive uninvited and often do not know who the host is, reflecting an indifferent attitude towards the deeper meaning of life. Gatsby himself doesn't really enjoy the party, which shows the irony of his hedonistic lifestyle. He threw a party to seek happiness, but the party itself was empty and without meaning to him.

Nick: "This is an unusual party for me. I haven't even seen the host. I live over there" I waved my hand at the invisible hedge in the distance, "and this man Gatsby sent over his chauffeur with an invitation." For a moment he looked at me as if he failed to understand.

Gatsby: "I'm Gatsby," he said suddenly." (M 24:22 - M 24:25)

This quote shows how Gatsby's parties became so large that the guests did not even know him in person, reflecting the theme of social ignorance in the hedonistic world he

created. Gatsby throws lavish parties not only for himself, but also to create an image of himself surrounded by successful and famous people. This is a clear example of a hedonistic lifestyle focused on momentary pleasure and external appearance.

b. Gatsby Shows his Mansion

Gatsby's house is not just a place to live, but a symbol of his dreams and hopes. He built it with a main goal: to win back Daisy Buchanan. The luxury of his house, complete with a large garden, servants, and large parties, reflects his belief that money and social status can bring back his past love.

When Gatsby is finally reunited with Daisy, he is eager to show her all that he has accomplished. He hopes that by seeing his luxurious house, Daisy will realize that he is now worthy of being loved. Gatsby believed that wealth and material accomplishments could make up for lost time. He sees his house as proof of success and as a means of bringing back the past

Daisy: "Oh, Jay. Hugh!

Gatsby: The house is nice, isn't it? See the entire front can be exposed to light"

(M 01:00:30)

The quote above shows how hedonism exists. There is Jay Gatsby who shows his luxurious house to Daisy and her friends. From his attitude showing his house, it can be seen how the woman he loves is so flattered and interested in the wealth that Gatsby has. This highlights how his obsession with Daisy has dictated his entire life, making wealth and luxury not an end in itself, but a means to achieve a long-lost love.

4.2 Character's Thought Shift

1) The Tinder Swindler (2022)

Simon Leviev does not show a significant change in thinking throughout the film. Even though he was caught and punished, he does not show any remorse or change in his hedonistic life principles. Throughout the film, he still believes that luxury and a luxurious lifestyle are his right, without realizing the consequences of his actions. Throughout the film, Simon shows no signs of remorse for his actions. Even after many of his victims realized his lies and he finally faced legal consequences, he maintained an arrogant attitude and showed no desire to change.

"I live the best life, I don't want to change." (M 39:40).

This indicates that Simon has no plans to quit or change his ways, even though he faces legal and social problems. All his actions based on hedonism did not make him feel guilty and intend to change himself, instead he felt entitled to enjoy this world and continue to spend whatever money he had because for him, hedonism is not just a choice, but a necessity.

2) The Great Gatsby (2013)

On the other hand, in *The Great Gatsby*, Gatsby's shift in thinking is very evident, although late. Initially, he believed that money and luxury would bring him back to Daisy, but the more he tried, the more he realized that reality was much more complex. Despite that, he never really let go of that hope, which actually led to his destruction.

Nick: "You can't repeat the past."

Gatsby: "Can't repeat the past? Why of course you can!" (M 01:20:54 - M 01:20:57)

This picture shows how Gatsby insisted on reliving the past, but in the end, he realized that his hopes were just an illusion and thought that all his wealth would end up getting good things but in fact it didn't and ended up just wishful thinking about his love for Daisy.

4.3 Comparison of Social Contexts

1) Social Context in *The Tinder Swindler* (2022)

This film reflects a modern, digital society, where social status and self-image are largely determined by what is seen on social media. Simon uses the image of a luxurious life and social relationships to get what he wants, proving that modern hedonism focuses not only on materialism but also on public recognition.

"I need a private jet to take me away from the danger." (M 53:59)

This dialogue shows the luxurious lifestyle presented by Simon through social media is a way for him to maintain his self-image and attract the attention of victims. Hedonism here is not only about personal satisfaction, but also about building and maintaining a social image.

2) Social Context in *The Great Gatsby* (2013)

The Great Gatsby is set in the Roaring Twenties, a period of partying, luxury, and excessive consumption. Here, hedonism is depicted as part of a capitalist culture that considers money and wealth to be symbols of happiness, but is still accompanied by emotional emptiness.

"I keep it always full of interesting people, night and day." (M 01:00:20)

The parties Gatsby throws are a reflection of the excessive consumption typical of the era, but he still feels lonely and alienated from the people in his life, highlighting the irony that luxury actually brings emptiness.

Discussion

In this study, both films are analyzed using a literary approach in the study of hedonism and the shift in character thinking. The literary location can be found in both films that raise the themes of hedonism, ambition, and the illusion of temporary happiness.

This study offers several updates compared to previous studies that discuss hedonism in literary works and films, namely:

- a. Combining two different films in one comparative study.

Most previous studies only focus on one film or one literary work. This study compares *The Tinder Swindler* (based on a true story) with *The Great Gatsby* (an adaptation of a classic novel).

- b. Analysis of hedonism is associated with the shift in character thinking.

Previous studies have discussed hedonism more in general. This study highlights how Simon and Gatsby experience a change in mindset on their journey to destruction.

1) Hedonism in *The Tinder Swindler*

The *Tinder Swindler* film tells the story of Simon Leviev, a man who uses a dating app to deceive women in order to finance his luxurious lifestyle. Hedonism here is depicted as a lifestyle centered on material pleasures, such as private jets, five-star hotels, and luxury goods. Simon makes pleasure and luxury his main goal, without regard to moral values or the social consequences of his actions.

Simon's character reflects the complacency of modern hedonism and its linking to consumer culture and social media. He creates false image to lure the victim creating a higher level of attraction based on emotional weaknesses of victim. But beneath the luxury, Simon is living a lie that he keeps building, exposing the spiritual void that lies at the heart of excessive hedonism.

Hedonism can be a tool and a goal, and Simon Leviev has made it both of those things in his life. He seeks luxury through deception, building the façade of a perfect life that lures a quarry. Simon's hedonism is sucked through a form of structured narcissism. He enjoys wealth, yes, but also not only power over others through emotional manipulation. Simon's victims are also touched by contemporary hedonism in which love and success have become equated with wealth. The context of hedonism here is not just about material possessions, it's also about social bolstering. Displaying a lavish lifestyle, Simon understands will get the attention and trust that is his source of power.

2) Hedonism in *The Great Gatsby*

The main character, Jay Gatsby in *The Great Gatsby*, embodies the hedonistic ideal of the American Dream. Gatsby throws lavish parties with green lights, wine, and uninvited guests so that he can be close to Daisy Buchanan, his true love. Hedonism here is characterized as a kind of pursuit of happiness through luxury. However, even with all this wealth, Gatsby is still empty because his goals are emotional and unrealistic.

Gatsby does not manipulate others directly, unlike Simon. Instead, he is a victim of the American Dream, where material success is equated with happiness. Ironically, Gatsby's hedonism does not lead to happiness, but to tragedy and destruction that ultimately kills Gatsby. Gatsby constructs a new identity through luxury, but that identity is, in the end, fragile and powerless to achieve his goals. Gatsby embodies the glamorization of hedonism, but the narrative illustrates that wealth alone cannot buy happiness. He is a victim of nostalgia and unrealistic expectations.

3) Characters' Shifts in Thinking

Simon Leviev: Simon is not much different at the end of the film than he is at the beginning. Manipulation remains a legitimate means of achieving goals in his mind. Even in custody, he demonstrates no remorse, signaling hedonism's inability to create morality.

Jay Gatsby: The evolution of Gatsby shows a more nuanced transition in perspective. At first he thinks that by obtaining wealth, Daisy will return to his life, but soon he comes to understand that

luxury cannot replace true love. But it's all too late, and he meets a tragic end. Simon stays on track, while Gatsby experiences deeper internal conflict, showing that the social context and values underlying hedonism greatly influence character development.

4) Comparison of Social Contexts

The *Tinder Swindler* performs hedonism in a contemporary economic environment that is underpinned by technology and social media, where the image is the primary style for performing social value. Simon's a product of an international consumerism that fetishizes appearance.

In *The Great Gatsby*, hedonism takes place in the context of the American Jazz Age, representing the 1920s, a period of major transition in American society. As Gatsby's hedonism is a product of the Jazz Age—an age where lavish celebrations and debauchery were hallmarks of accomplishment, he is a hostage to fantastical romantic ideals.

5) Similarities and Differences Between the Two Films

The similarities are manipulation through Wealth and Social Status Both Simon Leviev and Jay Gatsby use the image of luxury to gain profit, either in the form of money (Simon) or love (Gatsby). While the difference is in the form of fraud, Simon Leviev deceives others financially through psychological manipulation in the digital era and shows wealth on social media, while Gatsby indirectly deceives himself by believing that wealth can repeat the past. More clearly, Simon Leviev commits fraud to get praise from many people so that he looks luxurious and has a lot of wealth for his own financial gain. While Jay Gatsby indirectly deceives himself by thinking that he can change the past with wealth and get his love back, namely Daisy Buchanan.

4. Conclusion

Both films depict the dark side of hedonism. Simon Leviev in *The Tinder Swindler* and Jay Gatsby in *The Great Gatsby* both pursue luxury and happiness through material and social status, but in the end, they realize that true happiness cannot be achieved only through hedonistic pursuits. The irony arises because although both pursue momentary pleasure, they end up with greater destruction and loss. Hedonism in both films depicts an obsession with worldly pleasures. However, the approaches are different: *The Tinder Swindler* highlights social manipulation in modern culture, while *The Great Gatsby* explores romantic dreams wrapped in luxury.

Simon Leviev is an example of an individual who does not change, with hedonism as the basis of his morality. His life is a symbol of extreme consumerism and false imagery. Jay Gatsby is a tragic figure who realizes that wealth cannot fulfil his emotional needs. His hedonism is only a tool to pursue love, not the ultimate goal. The modern era in *The Tinder Swindler* shows how hedonism is driven by technology and social media, creating a false image that looks perfect but fragile. The 1920s in *The Great Gatsby* depicts the transition from traditional values to the modern era that is glamorous but full of emptiness. Thus, this study shows that hedonism, although it looks tempting, ultimately does not bring inner satisfaction and only leads to emptiness and tragedy, both in the modern social context and in the more traditional social context as depicted in *The Great Gatsby*. This study reminds us that the search for happiness through material things often ends in disappointment. Thus, this study reveals that not all forms of hedonism lead to true happiness, especially if they are based on the illusion of wealth and social image.

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