

ASIAN SOCIAL VALUES IN KEVIN KWAN'S *CRAZY RICH ASIAN*

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ABSTRACT

This study is entitled Asian Social Values in Kevin Kwan's Crazy Rich Asian." The analysis of this thesis focused on the social values found in the novel and the way of the author portrayed the social values in the novel. In this thesis analysis the writer applied socio literature approach. The method of the research was descriptive qualitative. The main goal of the study was to find out some social values in Kevin Kwan's Crazy Rich Asian. In this thesis analysis, the writer applied library research. The primary data analyzed were taken from the novel, it was the objects considered to social values which were used in the novel. The result of this analysis showed that there were four social values found in the novel they are Education, Income, Family Tie and Sense of Trust.

Keywords: *Asian Social Values, , Education, Income, Family Tie, Sense of Trust*

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini berjudul Nilai-Nilai Sosial Asia dalam Crazy Rich Asian karya Kevin Kwan. Analisis tesis ini difokuskan pada nilai-nilai sosial yang terdapat dalam novel dan cara pengarang menggambarkan nilai-nilai sosial dalam novel tersebut. Dalam analisis tesis ini penulis menerapkan pendekatan sosio sastra. Metode penelitian yang digunakan adalah deskriptif kualitatif. Tujuan utama dari penelitian ini adalah untuk mengetahui beberapa nilai sosial dalam buku Crazy Rich Asian karya Kevin Kwan. Dalam analisis tesis ini, penulis menerapkan penelitian kepustakaan. Data primer yang dianalisis diambil dari novel itu sendiri, yaitu objek-objek yang dianggap memiliki nilai sosial yang digunakan dalam novel. Hasil analisis menunjukkan bahwa ada empat nilai sosial yang terdapat dalam novel yaitu Pendidikan, Pendapatan, Ikatan Keluarga dan Rasa Kepercayaan.

Kata Kunci : *Nilai Sosial Orang Asia, Nilai Budaya Orang Asia, Pendidikan, Pendapatan, Ikatan Keluarga, Rasa Kepercayaan*

1. INTRODUCTION

The social and cultural have been issues commonly happen in society. The writer also feels these issues in society. The influence of social and cultural environment

creates some gaps among people. Not everyone can get along without caring about social and cultural background. There has to be some sorts of social class categories or decent cultural backgrounds to be able to

mingle in the society. It inspires some authors to create literary works which relate with these issues. Novel is one of them. In some novels, social and cultural issues can be found and described attractively. One of those is Kevin Kwan's *Crazy Rich Asian*.

Crazy Rich Asian is a series novel written by a Singaporean American novelist, Kevin Kwan. *Crazy Rich Asian* was published in 2013 inspired by Kevin Kwan's childhood in Singapore. The novels are known as satirical novels. They are *Crazy Rich Asian*, *China Rich Girlfriend* and *Rich People Problems*. In 2018, Kwan was one of 100 most influential people by *TIME* Magazine.

As it is previously explained, the writer chooses this topic because the novel contains story about social and cultural issues among the Asian people which can be related to human society in some cases. Some people concern about how to socialize with people in the same social status. The writer thinks that the social and cultural issues are interesting for some people who might can relate with these issues in the real life. Seeing the characters of the novel which are mostly Asian, it shows that Asian people tend to strict to the rules and tradition which have been passed down from generation to generation. The values of the

social and cultural in the novel are quite interesting. As one of the Asian who also lives in Asian country, the writer can relate with the issue itself.

Based on the background of the study above, the researcher intends to find out Asian social values found in Kevin Kwan's *Crazy Rich Asian*.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS

There are some relevant theories that are used for conducting this research, they are Socio Literature, novel, value, characteristics of value, Asian social value.

A. Socio Literature

Socio literature is known as the relationship between sociology and literature. The sociology of literature is not much different from the elements of study of extrinsic elements of literary works, the existence of literary works, and the role of literary works with social reality (Retno, 2009:164). According to Wellek and Warren (in Assylum, 2014:34), general literary studies with sociology are divided into three namely: the author's sociology, the sociology of literary works, and the sociology of the reader. Sociology of literature can be categorized as a literary study which the main target is the social of

individuals which is related to the society in the real life.

Ratna (2004) says in details that there are number of definitions regarding sociology of literature that needs to be considered in order to find objectivity of the relationship between literary works and society, among others, as follows:

1. Understanding of literature in consideration of social aspects
2. Understanding of the totality of works accompanied by social aspects contained in them
3. Understanding of literary works as well as community relations which are the background of it
4. Sociology of literature is a two way (dialectical) relationship between literature and society

Sociology of literature seeks to find interdependent quality between literature and society.

B. Novel

Literature as the expression of human's mind and ideas create products which is called literary works. There are many forms of literary works which have been created by human, one of them is novel. Novel is narrative text informing of prose with a long shape that including some

figures and fiction event. According to R.Agustina (2013), the words come from Italian, Novella, which means the new staff that small. The novel developed in England and America. The novel was originally developed in the region from other forms of narrative non-fiction, such as letters, biographies, and history. But with a shift in society and development of time, the novel is not only based on data non-fiction, author of novel can change according to desired imagination.

It is also stated by Ade (2008:24) that novel is along narrative whose imaginary characters and events are presented in a realistic, true-to-life manner. As part of literature, novel is the representation of human condition against the effort to reach the purpose of living.

Novel could not be separated from life, because novel as a kind of literature has strong relationship with society. Both literature and novel are related to each other. Novel, as a part of literature has affected towards the society. Novel is usually written based on what happens at times or the reality and experience from the author. Sometimes, novel based on the imagination of the author of the novel. Novel is an example of literary works that can be used by an author to express feelings, love, friendship, point of

view or everything that the author wants to express the story about the society. It means that, novel is reflection from the author.

There are two elements in the novel and other literary work. Those are intrinsic and extrinsic elements. The extrinsic element refers to social and psychological condition in society. Semi (1998:31) states “The intrinsic element of the literary work includes elements which establish a literary work inside. The elements are theme, plot, setting, character and characterization and figure of speech”. According to Robert, (as cited in Setiawati, 2016) intrinsic element of the literature itself without looking the relation with the external aspect. The intrinsic element in a novel can be classified into plot, character, theme, setting, point of view, language of style, etc. Extrinsic elements in ordinary fictional prose are values religion, political, and economy interests of the author. Although it is only external aspects, but usually a work of prose fiction will be more valuable if it contains extrinsic aspect as well (Thombroni, 2008:17)..

C. Value

The value is an important wake up in the virtues of every branch of social science, as in economics, philosophy, theology,

education, and counseling and Value is something valuable, quality, show quality, and useful for humans. Literature and values are two complementary social phenomena in their essence as existential. Literature as a product of life contains social values, philosophy, religion, and so forth both from the revealing and one who have a new concept. Literature enters not only the space and values of personal life, but also the values of human life in the total sense.

Value is something valuable, either according to the standards of logic (right or wrong), aesthetics (good or bad), ethics (fair or unfair), religion (sin or not), and as a reference and system for self-confidence and life (Hamid, 2007, pp. 27-28). Bertens (2005:139) states that value is something interesting for us, something we look for, something delighting and something good.

Values are basic and fundamental beliefs that guide or motivate attitudes or actions. They help us to determine what is important to us. Values describe the personal qualities we choose to embody to guide our actions; the sort of person we want to be; the manner in which we treat ourselves and others, and our interaction with the world around us. They provide the general guidelines for conduct.

Value in a narrow sense is good, desirable, or worthwhile. Values are the motive behind purposeful action. They are the ends to which we act and come in many forms. Personal values are personal beliefs about right and wrong and may or may not be considered moral. Cultural values are values accepted by religions or societies and reflect what is important in each context. Values are essential to ethics. Ethics is concerned with human actions, and the choice of those actions. Ethics evaluates those actions, and the values that underlie them. It determines which values should be pursued, and which shouldn't.

<https://www.ethicssage.com/2018/08/what-are-values.html>

D. Characteristics of Value

Values may be specific, such as honoring one's parents or owning a home or they may be more general, such as health, love, and democracy. "Truth prevails", "love thy neighbor as yourself", "learning is good as ends itself" are a few examples of general values. Individual achievement, personal happiness, and materialism are major values of modern industrial society. It is defined as a concept of the desirable, an internalized creation or standard of evaluation a person possesses. Such concepts and standards are

relatively few and determine or guide an individual's evaluations of the many objects encountered in everyday life.

The characteristics of values are:

1. These are extremely practical, and valuation requires not just techniques but also an understanding of the strategic context.
2. These can provide standards of competence and morality.
3. These can go beyond specific situations or persons.
4. Personal values can be influenced by culture, tradition, and a combination of internal and external factors.
5. These are relatively permanent.
6. These are more central to the core of a person.
7. Most of our core values are learned early in life from family, friends, neighborhood school, the mass print, visual media and other sources within the society.
8. Values are loaded with effective thoughts about ideas, objects, behavior, etc.
9. They contain a judgmental element in that they carry an individual's ideas as to what is right, good, or desirable.

10. Values can differ from culture to culture and even person to person.
11. Values play a significant role in the integration and fulfillment of man's basic impulses and desire stably and consistently appropriate for his living.
12. They are generic experiences in social action made up of both individual and social responses and attitudes.
13. They build up societies, integrate social relations.
14. They mold the ideal dimensions of personality and depth of culture.
15. They influence people's behavior and serve as criteria for evaluating the actions of others.
16. They have a great role to play in the conduct of social life. They help in creating norms to guide day-to-day behavior.

The values of a culture may change, but most remain stable during one person's lifetime. Socially shared, intensely felt values are a fundamental part of our lives. These values become part of our personalities. They are shared and reinforced by those with whom we interact. Since values often strongly influence both attitude and behavior, they serve as a kind of

personal compass for employee conduct in the workplace.

E. Asian Social Values

A value serves to direct the consideration or behavior of a person so that the guidelines in community life. Human life is patterned on social values. Wicaksono (2014:323) said that social values refer to individual relationships with other individuals in a society.

Various definitions of Asian values have been put forth. Generally, the phrase alludes to influences by [Confucianism](#) in particular, [filial piety](#) or loyalty towards the family, corporation, and nation; the forgoing of personal [freedom](#) for the sake of society's stability and prosperity; the pursuit of academic and technological excellence; and, a strong work ethic together with [thrift](#). Proponents of so-called Asian values, who tend to support Chinese style [authoritarian](#) governments, claims these values are more appropriate for the region than [Western democracy](#) with its emphasis on individual freedoms.

Asian values were codified and promoted in the [Bangkok Declaration of 1993](#), which re-emphasized the principles of sovereignty, self-determination, and non-

interference in civil and political rights.

They included:

1. Preference for [social](#) harmony;
2. Concern with [socio-economic](#) prosperity and the collective well-being of the community;
3. Loyalty and respect towards figures of authority;
4. Preference for [collectivism](#) and [communitarianism](#).

(https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Asian_values)

In general, values suggest an understanding of the teachings about good and bad received in general regarding actions, attitudes, obligations, etc., it can also be referred as moral, moral, and human morality (Alwi, 2007). Each nation or race has its own culture, social value and way of thinking, which underlie its system of economy, politics and social life. Therefore, the mutual understanding of each nation or race is the key to the peaceful development of the world in the time of globalization. According to Yoshino (2006), there are some social values which is known in the Asian society:

1. Education

In the past decades, people have started to invest more and more money to their child education, because the Asian people expect the higher education to be linked to economic and political power. As for example in China, the leaders had to be either the farmers or laborer in the Mao's reign, but now many of new leaders of the government and the Party in China are college graduates. Furthermore the government is calling back Chinese students who got Ph.D. degrees in USA or Japan, preparing certain high rank positions and high salaries for them. Some people say that China has already become a capitalist country, probably more capitalistic than Japan or USA in a sense. On the other hand, this rapid social change is producing a social confusion in China. Incredibly, for example, some people buy the certificate of college degree by money behind the scene.

2. Income

Income has been a valuable aspect in human life and also an important social values as Asian people. In China, people tend to have a job and also side business because side business is popular now in some cities and some people spend more energy and time for their side business to gain much more than in their regular jobs.

Tax and unemployment are new concepts to the today's Chinese.

3. Family Tie

It is known that family tie is remarkably strong in some Asian countries as for example Chinese. Fukuyama (1995) said that China developed the society of strong family ties because of the strong political centralization in the long history as in Italy or France, and that they did not necessarily develop intermediate social groups between families and the State.

4. Sense of trust

The last two decades have seen extensive studies on "trust" in the aftermath of cold war. It is now the time to reconsider how we can develop international trust in order to prevent conflicts between different countries, races, or religious groups released from the control of the political ideologies of old world system. There may be various possible definitions of "trust" (see Hosmer, 1995). For example, Zucker (1986) classified three ways of trust production: process-based trust tied to past exchanges, characteristic-based trust tied to personal characteristics, such as family background and ethnicity, and institutional-based trust tied to formal societal structures. Although Shapiro (1987) criticized the third category because he believes that trust cannot be

institutionalized, it would be possible that institutions such as a legal system can function where people cannot rely on interpersonal trust. This was actually happened in the time of industrial revolution.

The globalization necessarily changes some institutional systems and customs towards more universal ones under the influences of transnational exchange or trade. On the other hand, some other systems are becoming more and more sensitive to cultural differences, as a reaction to the globalization. For example, it is not always the case in the Asia that "the distrust is a culture of the poverty" as Banfield (1958) once mentioned. A Chinese proverb says that "Fine manners need a full stomach" (or "The belly has no ears"), but another says "Be contended with honest poverty." Gallup (1977,p.461) reported that they could not find a very poor but still happy people in their global survey.

3. RESEARCH DESIGN

This research methodology applied is qualitative research methods. Qualitative research is a scientific method of observation to gather non-numerical data. According to Sukmadinata (2010), qualitative methodology allows researcher to

describe and examine behavior, experience, believe and thoughts and then investigates the subject background into the context. The type of this research is "refers to the meanings, concepts, definitions, characteristics, metaphors, symbols, and description of things" and not to their "counts or measures".

In analysis this research, the writer needs data. The main data of this research has been taken from the novel written by Kevin Kwan, entitled *Crazy Rich Asian*. In addition to the primary data, the author refers to some relevant library research, reading the books, journals, articles, thesis, and also gathering some information from the internet.

4. DISCUSSION

Social and cultural are considered as valuable assets for the Asian in order to conserve the values who have been living with the Asian from generation to generation. The data obtained in this study are sourced from the text in the novel *Crazy Rich Asian* by Kevin Kwan which relates to the description of social and cultural values as Asian which described in the novel.

The data analysis of *Crazy Rich Asian* novel shows that the four Asian social values exist, namely education, income, family tie, and sense of trust.

1. Education

Education is seen as the only path to success for some Asian parents because the Asian people expect the higher education to be linked to economic and political power. By that explanation, the author would like to deliver the quotations from the novel which carried out the character who is mentioned with good educational background.

Rachel is a twenty-nine years old woman who is well into marriage life according to Asian standard, especially with her educational background which looks decent for Asian woman. As showed by quotation below :

Rachel is a professor in university which makes her will be able to get discount for the tuition fee once she has children. It shows that education is valuable so that parents will find any ways to be able to give decent education for the kids. As showed by quotation below :

Having children with a well educational background is such a pride not only for the children themselves but also pride for the parents. Edison Cheng is a son

of Cheng's family who is one the richest in Singapore. As showed by quotation below :

Astrid is such a perfect woman from Leong's family, another rich family from Singapore. As a daughter of honorable family, Astrid was trained and educated very well to be a valuable daughter for the family.

Another proof with Astrid Leong who is well educated by the parents as stated below :

Education is important as an asset for everyone to be able to survive through all things happen in life, the reason why everyone needs education. In other hand, educational background is a material to show off. This things often happen among the parents as an expression of proud and having pride. As Wye Mun mentioned about her daughter :

As the part of social values, having a decent education especially abroad is valuable to show that Asian people is worth to get well and proper education. Eventhough the education in Singapore is categorised as good quality, but many people especially the rich ones prefer to study abroad.

Education can be seen as one of the important social values as Asian people. There are eight values of education which are found in the novel. Education is basically important for everyone, but for it is particularly important for Asian because it is such a symbol of successful among the Asian people. Education has its own role as pride among the Asian family. It means Asian parents are willing to do everything just to get the kids having decent education.

2. Income

Income has been a valuable aspect in human life and also an important social value as Asian people. income does lead happiness for some particular people. The category of happiness itself is different depends to the person. Some people tend to flex the money to show how rich they are . As stated below :

Income is one of big issues among the Asian people in order to show how success they are in making money. In order to get big income, people have to work hard to make living. But, some people are just born as silver spoon, just like Astrid Leong who was born rich. In can be seen in the following quotation :

The Chengs are known as one of the richest family in Singapore. They have been rich from generation to generation. But their wealth does not just come without effort. Apparently, the Chengs are able to expand their ability in making more money. The idea can be seen in the following below :

The characters in the novel are dominated by filthy rich people. The characters themselves are filled with Asian people. From novel, the characters are described as they own incredibly expensive things. But as Asian, they like to show it off and are not being humble. This is also a suitable description of rich Asian people. As showed by quotation below :

Everyone has their standard of living on their own. Either having a simple life with full of happiness or having a perfect life loaded with money and wealth. The characters in this novel are mostly having the life without worrying about money and it is far from having simple life. As can be seen in the following quotation below :

As one of value in life, wealth is everyone's dream. The greatest benefit of being wealth is free from financial problem. These Asian characters in the novel who are loaded tend to buy luxurious things in order to satisfy their desire of spending more

money having it shown to people. As showed by quotation below :

Income is a sum that includes any wage, salary, profit, interest payment, rent or other form of earnings received in a given period of time. Income affects financial stability and it shows the prosperity of a person in a family. In the novel, there are 21 values of income are found as the proof of how important income is towards the Asian people. Income is sort of everyone needs, but is such a pride in a family among Asian people. In the novel can be seen that the Asian people tend to show of their wealth by buying expensive stuffs to show how rich they are, in order to get other people's recognition.

3. Family Tie

Family is always considered as something that is always needed by human beings. Family contains the most important relationships for individuals and forms the foundations of all social organisation. People need strong family ties to feel loved and safe in this world. For many Asian people believe that family provides a sense of identity and a strong network of support.

In this novel, each character has good relationship especially most of the

character are related each other as family. In the beginning of the story, the relationship between the families are described well. As the main character, Nicholas Young has many cousins because he comes from a big family. The This condition can be proved by quotation below :

Coming from big family, Nicholas Young's family are also categorised quite close towards each other. The family tie is important to them as they often attend each other's celebration party. Just like Asian people in common, family tie is an important value. In this case, they are supportive family. As stated below :

The good relationship is not only be seen among Nichols's family, but also from Rachel Chu and her mother. Living with a single mother since she was little is giving her a close relationship between mother and daughter. Moreover, Rachel's family does not have sort of wonderful past. It makes Rachel always tells her mother everything happens in her life.

Family ties among these families are precious. They do not only care because of some particular intentions but they do care of each other. Either the relationship between husband and wife or parents and

children are shown just like typically Asian people who try to maintain good relationship with families.

Family is life is quite a statement which is true. Family is important and as a base for Asian people. The value of having their own roles in family is sort of responsibility to take care of each other. It builds stronger relationship between the families.

Family has an important role in life. A good relationship in family can build a feeling of security and loved. There are 19 values of family tie are found in *Crazy Rich Asian* novel. It shows that family tie is important for Asian people. It is common for Asian to have grown up kid living together with the parents to maintain the good relationship in a family. But it seems unusual for other country which is out of Asia. The parents will let the kid to be independent in living by their own. This family tie also can create good connection to the outside world. Having a well known family has particular advantage for some people. It can be useful in some conditions too.

4. Sense of Trust

Sense of trust is also one Asian social values. Trust plays a pervasive role in social affairs, even sustaining acts of cooperation

among strangers who have no control over each other's actions. Placing trust in a person can be seen as a strategic act, a moral response, or even an expression of social solidarity. Trust is often holds the relationship among people.

Trust is a set of behaviours which lead people to have belief that something or someone is reliable. Sense of trust is needed by everyone in order to understand and have a good relationship with people around. There are four values of sense of trust are found in *Crazy Rich Asian*.

4. CONCLUSIONS

Having analyzed all the data collected from *Crazy Rich Asian* novel, the writer is finally able to answer the problems of study. Referring to the data analysis, the writer concludes that there are four Asian social values which are: education, income, family tie and sense of trust.

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