

**MAINTAINING LIFE WITH NOBILITY IN NOVEL *KIRA-KIRA* (2004)  
BY CHYNTIA KADOHATA**

**Thesis**

*Submitted as a partial fulfillment of the requirement to obtain  
the strata one (S1) degree*



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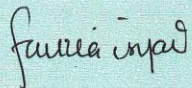
### Maintaining Life with Nobility

In novel *KIRA-KIRA* by Chyntia Kadohata (2004)

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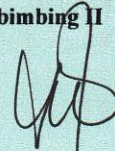
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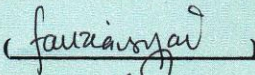
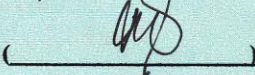

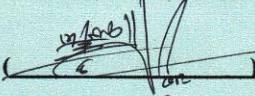

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## ABSTRAK

**Sanjaya, Ade. 2012. "Maintaining Life with Nobility in Novel KIRA-KIRA by Chyntia Kadohata (2004)" Thesis, FBS UNP**

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Skripsi ini merupakan analisa novel *KIRA-KIRA* (2004) karya Chyntia Kadohata yang berjudul *Maintaining Life with Nobility*. Masalah yang diangkat dalam analisis ini adalah bagaimana para tokoh utama mempertahankan kehidupan mereka sebagai imigran dinegara asing tanpa banyak peranan dari orang tua mereka. Cara yang mereka pilih adalah dengan mengedepankan dan mengimplementasikan sikap dan sifat *nobility*. Tujuan dari penganalisaan ini untuk mendapatkan jawaban sejauh mana novel *KIRA-KIRA* memperlihatkan sikap nobility yang membantu tokoh utama untuk bertahan dalam kehidupan mereka. Disamping itu, analisis ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui sejauh mana *character*, *conflict* dan *setting* mendukung pemaknaan berdasarkan perspektif *Nobility* dan *Morality*. Hasil analisis menunjukkan bahwa kedua tokoh utama menggunakan dan mengedepankan sikap nobility dalam kehidupan mereka. Sikap nobility yang diimplementasikan oleh tokoh pertama adalah dengan menjadi orang yang bertanggung jawab dalam hal memberikan rasa aman terhadap adiknya serta mengimplementasikan ilmu pengetahuan dalam kehidupan yang berdampak positif. Sedangkan sikap nobility yang dilakukan oleh tokoh kedua adalah menjadi orang yang bertanggung jawab terhadap adik, kakak, serta orang tuanya dan mempunyai panutan dari pribadi orang lain sebagai tuntunannya.

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>ABSTRACT.....</b>	<b>i</b>
<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENT.....</b>	<b>ii</b>
<b>TABLE OF CONTENT.....</b>	<b>iii</b>
<b>CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION.....</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1 Background of the Study.....	1
1.1.1 Maintaining Life with Nobility.....	5
1.1.2 A Brief of Chyntia Kadohata.....	6
1.1.3 Kira-Kira.....	9
1.2 Problem of Study.....	10
1.3 Purpose of Study.....	11
1.4 Previous Study.....	11
1.5 Theoretical Framework.....	12
1.6 Methodology.....	17
<b>CHAPTER II: DISCUSSION.....</b>	<b>18</b>
2.1 Lynn Takeshima.....	18
2.1.1 Responsible person.....	22
2.1.2 Implemented Knowledge.....	27
2.2 Katie Takeshima.....	27
2.2.1 Responsible Person.....	27
2.2.2 Having Reverence.....	36
<b>CHAPTER III: CONCLUSION.....</b>	<b>39</b>
<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY</b>	



# **CHAPTER I**

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Background of the Study**

People in life would face obstacles in order to survive in a condition, to reach the goal, purpose or improvement. The obstacles can be passed depend on how strong people have desire and commitment to reach their goal. Furthermore, the way people to reach their goal is generally categorized into two, right or suitable way and wrong or incorrect way. The wrong way is derived when people is really ambitious and only follow their impulsive. They become arrogant and ignore the impact of their action to the society around them. It means that they have committed themselves with bad attitude. While suitable or right way is usually did by people who aware the boundaries and limitation around them. They would prefer to find another better way rather than forcing themselves to cross the convention. In other word, they commit themselves with positive habit or attitude as a way to survive or to reach their goal.

Generally, positive attitude or habit is also seen as a moral action or attitude that occurs in human life. People who behave based on moral usually recognize and believe to certain values, goodness or customs. This good behavior would guide and help them in life because it gives positive feedback or impact both to themselves and to others. Moral or positive attitude is derived from experience of people or human in their life. Baron in Medin (2009) states that moral develops through experiences and



progress in human life. The more experiences do the people have, the more considerations of moral will take place in their life. Moral attitude or action can be done by everyone in every state including surviving toward condition. It can be done by a child in family, a leader in his or her group or a person toward someone others. Thus, moral can be done both in group or society and personal.

Family is one of example of group of society that holds to a goodness, values and customs as a source of moral. The members of family hold that goodness as standard of moral that guide their life including in surviving toward certain situation. One of the reflections of family that hold moral attitude to survive in life can be seen from Japanese. Japanese people are known by their strong cultures, values or goodness. In family, high valuation of elderly, education and responsible each other are some of Japanese cultures which belong to their moral action. Their action to behave based on moral was seen in 19<sup>th</sup> century when they had to move to America as immigrant. Economical factor had become the major reason for their migration to this country.

Unfortunately, when they had moved to America, they would not directly find their economic situation better. As a result, they should survive in lack of basic needs such as education, food and job which called poverty. Beside this situation, they are also confronted with dilemma related to moral actions and customs. This is happened because they are in different environment and people. This difference had

brought them into two options between integrating or assimilating. Kibria in Johnston (1997) says:

Immigrants who reside in the new country begin to create a new family life, one that is influenced by both past cultural customs and the ways of the new country, but is also different from both. Such families exemplify integration or bicultural adjustment rather than assimilation.

The quotation above shows that immigrants tend to keep their past culture and also let themselves to understand native culture. They do it as another way to survive in the new area as new comers. They do not eliminate all the past culture and choose to struggle the essential value of it rather than to assimilate or become the native. The two options actually also influence into their improvement in the new country.

Besides, immigrant should also live in poverty. Poverty, according to Lemieux and Pratto (2003) exists because of it is a creation of people to limit other people access toward their basic needs and education. It means that people who live in poverty have to find and improve their own life by their own efforts. This condition has forced immigrant to take all opportunities and use all their time to work in order to survive in new area. As a result, they do not have time to interact each other as society and as family.

In family, parents cannot accompany, educate, protect and guide their children related to their life, moral values and belief. As a result, children should have certain defense, actions or role in order to overcome their loneliness toward the situation.

Children of immigrant who lives in this situation might have some options to live and survive as what they believe. However, some of them chose to maintain their condition and life with nobility or moral action. Richard Rorty in Nussbaum (2007) says that nobility is an action related to moral progress that aims to be “good” implementation. It creates desires to affirm and conduct situation with strong and healthy ideas and thought.

Furthermore, Richard Rorty in Dutton (1990) says that human in their interaction will have moral progress that is related to the ability to consider and determine the moral actions in society and life. People who have noble character mean that they have conducted themselves with moral values. Thus, this moral development also involved in the immigrants to maintain their life with nobility action beyond the condition and problems they face.

One of examples from effort to maintain life with nobility is what Journal of USA has reported in February (2008) about I.M Pei, a Chinese immigrant who is successful to settle and reach her dream as an architect. She had lived in America since World War II together with her family. One of the greatest achievements in her life is being participated in guiding her sister and brother to survive in poverty condition and together reach their dream. As a result, she becomes a successful person and neither do her sister and brother. This is the way of nobility from I.M Pei that she had maintained in her life.

The phenomenon of maintaining life with nobility is an interesting issue to be explored. Nobility is an action that is done in life in which people regard moral as the important thing rather than individual interest. One of the novels that encloses this issue is found in *Kira – Kira* (2004) written by Chyntia Kadhohata. In this study, the actions deal with characters, Katie and Lynn, Japanese Immigrant who live in America struggle to live in poverty and maintain it with nobility.

### **1.1.1 Maintaining Life with Nobility**

Maintaining or maintain means conserve, keep up, uphold as true, right, or reasonable. In Merriam Webster Dictionary (2011) maintain deals with the effort to keep and survive in an existing state or condition. It means that the word maintain figures out the condition of people to keep what they believe and argue in their life. In this analysis, the word maintains is paired with the word life. It means that maintaining life is a condition of protagonist to keep doing something noble as an action to survive in life in the middle of problems which aim to keep their existence.

Nobility means the state of a person of being noble, determining something affirmatively based on moral or positive attitude. Nietzsche in Lacey (2008) states that nobility deals with sense of one's goodness independent of others' opinions, willingness to take responsibility, and ability to tolerate and express a strong, positive, healthy personality. It can be concluded that to act with nobility, people will have a strong personality and master them with goodness. The goodness that holds by noble people is related to moral as an action or belief.



Moreover, moral as an important part of noble people is also explained by Richard Rorty in Walberg (2010). He says that morality deals with the way people to achieve something in the life; there is no relation with rule which dictate the life. It means that the concept of moral is not related to what have stated. It develops through experience and progress of human in life. Moral is an achievement in human life. It is not limited by rule as long it gives positive impact.

In this analysis, maintaining life with nobility means the effort to keep the life with moral actions or attitude toward the situation. Their morality develops through experience and progress in their life. Their status and condition as immigrant contributes to the way they take action and their way of thinking. It can be seen from the reflection of the characters that maintain their noble action in this novel. They live as immigrant in America in the situation of poverty and the absence of parents.

### **1.1.2 A Brief of ChyntiaKadhohata**

Chyntia Kadohata was born in Chicago, Illinois, in 1956 or 1957. Kadohata was an intense and dedicated student. She loves reading and some of her early favorites books were *Charlotte's Web* by E. B. White (1899–1977) and *White Fang* by Jack London (1876–1919). Although she enjoyed reading, Kadohata had no interest in becoming a writer.

While in Chicago Kadohata attended an alternative high school, but when the family moved to Los Angeles and Kadohata entered Hollywood High, many of her

credits did not transfer and she eventually dropped out of school. When she was eighteen years old, Kadohata was admitted to Los Angeles City College. She later transferred to the University of Southern California, where she received a Bachelor of Arts degree in journalism.

After graduation, twenty-one-year-old Kadohata had a life-changing experience when a car jumped a curb and barreled into her as she was walking down a street in Los Angeles. The accident left her with a broken collarbone and a severely damaged right arm. During her recovery Kadohata went to live with her sister in Boston, Massachusetts. It was there, while wandering through the city's many bookstores that she rediscovered her love of reading, a hobby she had abandoned as she grew older. Kadohata devoured dozens of books of short stories. While working at various temporary jobs Kadohata began writing her own stories and submitting them to national magazines, including the Atlantic and the New Yorker.

In 1986, the New Yorker accepted her first short story called "Charlie O." Several other stories were subsequently purchased by other magazines, including The Pennsylvania Review. While submitting stories, Kadohata honed her writing skills by taking classes at the University of Pittsburgh in Pennsylvania and New York's Columbia University. The genre which is adopted by Kadohata was the science-fiction/fantasy genre or younger heroines. Some of Kadohata's novels are *The Floating World* (1992), *In the Heart of the Valley of Love* (1992), *The Glass*

*Mountains* (1992). Later, she became famous after writing *Kira –Kira* which published in (2004) and won the John Newbery award in 2005, and *Weedflower* (2006). Brabander in The Horn Book Magazine (2004) for *Kira –Kira* stated that:

....The novel captures both the specific experience of being Japanese American in the 1950s and the wider experience of illness and loss.

Kadohata's work reflects the harsh time in which the novel was published. The situation of immigrant in the 1950s was surrounded by pressure and intimidation that haunted them. In addition, the experiences of illness and loss have completed their condition. In other critic, according to Susan Faust in the Seattle Times (2005) stated that:

What's really compelling here is the quietude of the book, in that there's both pathos [arousing feelings of sympathy] and humor, and I think the book kind of radiates a sense of hope from the inside out.

The statement shows another reflection from the novel *Kira – Kira* that shows a sense of hope and humor. The harsh time that faced by immigrant were also accompanied by humor which aimed to relax the reader and a sense of hope, hope to have a better condition, to be healthy, to stand out, and to survive in the land of America as immigrant.

### **1.1.3 Kira-Kira**

The novel *Kira-Kira* (2004) by Chyntia Kadohata reflects the actions to maintain life with nobility. Nobility is a moral implementation in life. In this novel, the action to maintain life with nobility is represented by protagonist, Katie and Lynn, as immigrant daughters of Takhesima's family. They struggle to maintain their nobility in family and environment. Both protagonist show their nobility through becoming responsible person, implemented knowledge, and having reverence.

The first character is Lynn Takeshima. The protagonist's nobility is represented with two actions. First, she becomes a responsible sister. She does parenting to her sister with educated and affirmative way. She gives her sister the feeling of secure whenever they are together. The second form is implementing knowledge. Through this action, she gets positive impression in her school and in her environment. In her school, she builds positive image as a smart student with good performance among her friend and her teacher. In her environment, she is also a smart girl. She is a leader among other immigrant friend. Besides, she overcomes her curiosity through learning and reading.

The second character is Katie Takeshima. The protagonist shows her noble with two forms. First, she becomes a responsible sister and child. She handles all equipment related to her little brother. She creates a comfort situation to her brother both in action and hope. She also takes part in supporting a better condition of her



sister from her sickness. She treats her sister based on medical treatment and makes a comfort situation such as influencing spirit, hope, and being a good career for her. Then, she encourages her parents' spirit, mood and confident through her positive action both in house and school. Second, she determines her reverence or role model in life. She initiates Lynn, her sister, to be her reverence. She becomes a person who loves reading and she gets the way to care each other.

## **1.2 Problem of Study**

There are many cases that can be examined in Chyntia Kadohata's novel *Kira – Kira*(2004). However, maintaining life with Nobility emerges as the main issue in the life of characters. In order to reveal the action to maintain life with Nobility in this novel, research questions are needed. Those research questions are:

1. How far does the novel *Kira-Kira* from Chyntia Kadohata show the actions to maintain life with Nobility?
2. To what extend do the character, setting, and conflict give contribution to disclose Maintaining life with Nobility?

## **1.2 Purpose of study**

This study is intended to reveal Maintaining life with Nobility in the novel *Kira – Kira*(2004) by Chyntia Kadohata. This study also will explore to what extend characters, setting and conflict give contribution in revealing the action to maintain life with nobility.

### 1.3 Previous Study

The analysis which is referenced to this novel that focuses on the maintaining life with nobility has not been found yet. However, there are several studies in journal that have given contributions and inspirations in analyzing this novel.

The first analysis is written by Gregory Millard (2006) entitled *Moral Agency in the Modern Age: Reading Charles Taylor through George Grant*. His analysis concerns about the process of affirmation in the modernity related to the concept of philosophy by Charles Taylor. According to Millard, moral in modern era have several sources such as reason, nature, and God which contributed to the process creation of modern identity. But, one of the main and important factors in forming the modern identity is “will”. Will plays important role in creating decision, building image and the succesful of someone in modern era. The character Grant is viewed to have astrong will in building his life. He becomes successful in careeer and family because of pressure that comes after he learned from his experience. This will drives him toward a better life both for him and his family.

The other study that gives contribution to this study is done by Georges Sawadogo (2007) entitled *Poetry and Cultural Identity in F.T Pacere’s writing: from identity affirmation to universal humanism*. The analysis is related to the affirmation of identity and the effort to achieve universal humanism that related to the concept of socio-culture. This poetry deals with how people are not only doing affirmation toward their identity but also how they are being open to the world especially other

cultures. The main point in the process of affirmation is located in how characters in this poetry regarded their identity. They didn't see their identity as an obstacle to gain success. Furthermore, they created themselves to understand and respect other customs as they reverence and also as a way to enrich knowledge.

The analyses above give contribution and inspiration to the topic maintain life with nobility. They also enriched the knowledge about the topic. Different from previous study, this analysis focuses on how far the novel reflects the action to maintain life with nobility that is reflected by the characters and setting in the novel.

#### **1.4 Theoretical Framework**

The analysis of this novel related to the concept of nobility by Friedrich Nietzsche and morality by Richard Rorty in Philosophical view. Generally, nobility is found in individual and it is formed within life and society. It emerges as a desire to reach a better life or as positive solution toward difficulties. Nietzsche in Lacewing (2008) states:

Nobility involves a 'grand attitude' (e.g. the perspective of eternal return) and a longing for 'expansive inner states', not a sense of being caught up in oneself, but a continual 'self-overcoming.

From the quotation above, people with noble character have a special projection toward life and do not want to survive and exist with the existence state only; they will move and challenge themselves toward something better and valuable. The ability to decide better will continually be the part of them.

In other analysis, Richard Rorty in Johnston (2010) states;

The noble spirit engages in a practice of creating new language to author its own personal account of being. This poetic act of creation is the only means by which one transcends the flawed philosophic practice of “separating time from a temporal truth,” and “escapes from inherited descriptions of the contingencies of...existence and finds new descriptions. (Rorty 29)

From the quotation above, nobility has a relation with the process of human development. Nobility also can be found in author as human who has progress in life. In this case, the author uses the ability to influence and deliver their message toward audience through the work. They create a new tendency in language related to the progress and experience they have toward the existence condition. The purpose is to develop the novelty of the work in order to fit it with a new philosophical view. Thus, progress of life within author also involves her or his nobility as a way to deliver the main message through philosophical view to other people.

Moreover, people with noble character master themselves; they are able to conduct their ability and desire in every state or condition. People in life usually become arrogant and give up toward something and those happen because they act impulsively rather than intuitively. Although humanities character could not be separated from all human, people with nobility will not let these condition happen last longer because they have a high self-motivation and responsible to overcome it.



In this analysis, the concept of nobility is also related with the concept of morality. Moral, in Merriam Webster Dictionary (2010) defines as an action which is related to standard of right and wrong. The act which is based on morality values will give affirmative influences to the life because it deals with someone goodness. Solidarity and responsibility are some products of moral actions among society. A person does not live individually; society that contains of circumstances presents as the media for human to interact and socialize each other. Rules, ethics, religion and tribe are some kind of circumstances that rooted from moral values. Noble people are not viewing these differences as a problem. Rorty in Dutton (1990) said that:

Moral progress, understood as development in the direction of greater human solidarity . . . the ability to see more and more traditional differences (of tribe, religion, race, customs, and the like) as unimportant when compared with similarities with respect to pain and humiliation — the ability to think of people wildly different from ourselves as included in the range of ‘us’.

Each of individual has each own moral progress and development in life. People who involve moral as a consideration will see traditional differences such as religion, tribe, race, custom, culture, interest, food as a nature of human. They do not consider these things as a bad treatment toward the existence of certain group or people. Furthermore, they prefer to develop themselves and influence goodness including helping each other rather than arguing and creating range of people. This is considered as one of characteristic from noble person.

Furthermore, there are some noble characters according to Nietzsche on Rorty (1989). First, noble character should affirm their own existence, identity and moral through value creation. It means that noble people should have high valuation toward their existence and position in society. Second, they must have a strong and healthy personality. This kind of personality would help noble person in affirming his or her existence and also others. Third, they are responsible to others and to what they have done. Fourth, they have other people as reverence or role model. Next, they ignore traditional differences such as tribe, race, identity, and status. As a result they are able to determine their role and put themselves in the right position. Last, they have the ability to implement their knowledge that is related to intellectuality. This intellectuality plays important role in noble person. It would help noble people to determine their action and way of thinking.

In this analysis, the protagonists maintain their life with nobility in poverty or poor situation and the absence of parents. They determine some characteristics of noble people. They become responsible people toward their sister, brother and parents. This role has fulfilled the role that has been left by their parents. In other situation, the protagonist also has her own reverence that becomes guidance in playing her role in family including in making decision and treatment. Then, the protagonist also implements her knowledge. This characteristic brings the protagonist to the image creation among environment and family. Thus, the three characteristics

are committed by the protagonist in running their life as immigrant's daughter who have to live in new circumstance in America.

The analysis of this novel is supported by text-based and context-based interpretation. Guerin (2002) stated that text-based interpretation focus on literary works itself, while everything outside the text is ignored. It signifies that the meaning of the whole story is uncovered from the text by observing the sign system that constructs a literary work.

The process of analysis is done by examining its fictional devices, character, setting, and conflict. Madden (1999) stated that the analysis of the character can be done through their action, dialogue, reaction toward the circumstances and what other character state about them. Several aspects from setting such as time when the story takes place and the political and cultural condition can be observed because those occur in the characters' dialogues, thoughts, statements, and actions. Madden (2002) stated that setting in fictional is the location and atmosphere of the story. It has direct and indirect impact on character and conflict; it supports story meaning. The status of the characters as immigrant of Japanese in 1952s and their different culture can be observed as setting.

The other element that is involved is conflict. Robert (1999) stated that conflict is not only between protagonist and antagonist but may occur within the characters' own mind. In this study, the conflicts that are faced by both protagonists are the effort

to keep morality actions toward her family and the ability to influence intellectuality to others; both these conflicts are aimed to the effort to maintain their nobility.

### **1.5 Methodology**

The analysis of this novel is focused on maintaining life with nobility that are done by immigrant in America in Chyntia Kadohata's novel *KIRA-KIRA* (2004). This analysis is done through text-based approach. Furthermore, it is done by analyzing fictional devices. Fictional devices are character, setting and conflict. Character is used to disclose the action to maintain life with nobility as an immigrant in America. Then, in this analysis, the setting relates to poverty, the protagonist status as immigrant and their new circumstances in new area America. Last, conflict helps in analyzing this analysis. Moreover, these elements are analyzed based on the concept of nobility by Nietzsche and morality by Richard Rorty.