

AMERICAN SELFISHNESS AS REFLECTED IN IRA LEVIN'S "A KISS BEFORE DYING"

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Abstract

This research is entitled "American Selfishness as reflected in Ira Levin's A Kiss Before Dying". The purpose of this study is to find out cause of selfishness that reflected American Selfishness that was found in the novel "A Kiss Before Dying" by Ira Levin. The method that has been used in this research is qualitative because this method can provide accurate data. The Data obtained from the novel A Kiss Before Dying consists of 3 Parts and fifteen chapters in each part. Data is also taken from the books and journals concerned with this research. The results showed that there are 2 causes Corliss reflected American selfishness they are stubbornness and rebels, and there are 2 impacts of that selfishness itself they are greedy and deception.

Keywords: *Selfishness, Self-Destruction, Stubbornness*

Abstrak

Penelitian ini berjudul "Keegoisan Amerika yang tercermin dalam novel Ira Levin "A Kiss Before Dying". Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk mengetahui penyebab keegoisan Amerika yang ditemukan dalam novel "A Kiss Before Dying" oleh Ira Levin. The Metode yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini adalah kualitatif, karena metode ini dapat memberikan data yang akurat. Data diperoleh dari novel A Kiss Before Dying yang terdiri dari 3 bagiandengan masing-masing 15 bab. Data juga diambil dari buku dan jurnal yang berkaitan dengan penelitian ini. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa ada 2 penyebab Corliss mencerminkan keegoisan Amerika yaitu keras kepala dan pemberontak, dan ada 2 akibat dari keegoisan itu sendiri yaitu kerakusan dan penipuan.

Kata Kunci: *Keegoisan, Pemberontak, Keras Kepala.*

1. INTRODUCTION

American Selfishness cannot be separated from the history of America. Selfish people are scared to show weakness. Selfish people cannot and will not accept constructive criticism. Being selfish is not only characterized by self-centeredness but also with a false sense of entitlement. Selfish people prefer easy judgment and nothing is easier than judging behind a person's back. Alanson (1939:20) explains "selfishness is a fundamental principle whom are you live for yourself. Selfishness concerned with one's own interest, and advantage". It means that selfishness is a term used to describe an individual who orients his behaviors, feelings, and thought around his own self-fulfillment while disregarding the impact of his action on others. Selfishness has been criticized as a vice and celebrated as a virtue by different cultures and thinkers.

Selfishness is "caring supremely or unduly for one's self." Selfishness is a rational thought or an act for the individual to attain his/her own happiness. selfishness is the right of a person to seek for his own sake, he has the freedom to do what he desires, merely as long as he will not violating other's people rights. Selfishness constructs happiness. One feels happy when he is getting what he needs and enjoys everything surrounding him, and happiness is what people inspire him to have for his entire life. Selfishness is a wisdom step, for one to easily accomplish his long-lasting happiness. Selfishness confronts difficulties like lose friends, lose significant things, isolate from the crowd, but these things only happen when an individual performs irrational selfishness, he abuses other rights. Selfish people are manipulative and they are looking to get something out of you for their own benefit. Selfishness is a sign of weakness, the selfish person fears to give some of his time, money, or effort to others because he is afraid of the consequence that might happen on making such a sacrifice. Being selfish is like having a bag full of other negative emotions with selfishness taking top seed. The reason people become selfish is because of jealousy, envy, greed, and hate. It sows the seeds of war, crime, corruption, detachment, family divisions, and disparity many others. The biggest reason is that selfish people tend to think they don't have enough, even if they do. A selfish person, therefore, is also likely to be stingy. Essays, UK. (November 2018). The Ethics Of Selfishness Philosophy Essay.

Selfishness is having more concern for yourself than for others. It is caring, through thoughts or actions, more about your own needs than the needs and well-being of other people. It may be accompanied by a lack of empathy. Selfishness is the opposite of selflessness. It is also different, though related, to self-center and self-affirmation. Many psychologists approve of a healthy level of selfishness, from some people to stay

happy. (Symington, 1993:8) And this novel tells about the selfishness a man. A Kiss Before Dying is one of Ira Levin's novels which was published in 1953. This novel tells about Bud Corliss who returns from serving in World War II. According to the statement above, it is interesting to analyze American Selfishness in A Kiss Before Dying because this novel can give us a lesson that we cannot be a selfish people to get money into our life. Then this thesis will be entitled American Selfish as reflected in the novel by Ira Levin.

Based on the introduction above, there are some problems discussed in this research namely: 1). What caused Bud Corliss to be Selfish as reflected in Ira Levin's *A Kiss Before Dying*? 2). What were the impacts of American Selfishness on Bud Corliss in Ira Levin's *A Kiss Before Dying*?

2. METHODOLOGY

The writer applies the library research method. Library research is research where we get the information we need by reading articles, books, journals, and so on. The writer looks for information on journals and books beside the movie she watched. The method of this research used descriptive qualitative method. According to Endraswara (2011:5), descriptive qualitative method is the research method that is described in word form or picture if necessary, not thenumerals. The main source of data in this research is *A Kiss Before Dying* by Ira Levin, a psychological Novel, published since in 2013.

In this research, the writer used note-taking as the instrument. To find the data easily, the writer made some notes such as marks a sentence that shows of selfishness after reading the novel to classify the important units or part of a script that related to the problems and objectives of the research. In collecting the data, the writer has done some procedures as follows: 1). Reading the novel repeatedly. 2). Determining the characters that be analyzed. 3). Classifying and determining the relevant data. 4). Collecting some supporting data from other references that are related to the topic. Before writing this study, the writer had to understand the kind of study. The ways of data analysis by the writer consist of 1). Reading *A Kiss Before Dying* that written by Ira Levin many times and understanding the novel. 2). Finding out and analyzing the portrait selfishness in the novel.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The result of data analysis is taken from the analysis process though Selfishness, American Selfishness reflected on novel *A Kiss Before Dying* by Ira Levin. The writer will show the analysis of data that has been done by reading the novel and found data that related to the problem concerned. All data searches will be shown below. In this

study, the writer has done the analysis of this novel entitle A Kiss Before Dying written by Ira Levin. Her research analyzed American selfishness that reflected in Ira Levin's novel *A Kiss Before Dying* and causes of selfishness reflected by the main character based on the novel. Therefore, she has found the data concerning selfishness in the story of the novel A Kiss Before Dying by Ira Levin. As the result of the research, the writer has found the things concerning the related problem in this research.

The analysis of American selfishness in this study is taken from the novel *A Kiss Before Dying* by Ira Levin. Based on the first chapter before, the analysis of this study is concerned with finding the impact of American Selfishness that show in this novel. The writer will be compare in the following below:

1. Causes of Selfishness

According to the explanation in chapter II about selfishness, in this chapter the writer will show that there are two causes Bud Corliss to be selfish and two impacts of American Selfishness reflected Bud Corliss shows in Ira Levin's novel *A Kiss Before Dying*.

- a. Stubborn

Stubbornness is a basic character flaw or personality defect adopted in adolescence to protect the self at the level of false personality. It means that stubbornness is essentially an entrenched resistance to change and given that life is all about change, stubbornness is effectively a resistance of life itself. Stubborn show by Corliss as the protagonist when he said he don't want to marry his girlfriend because he worried about their future, in this case his own future. He knows that if he marry Dorothy while Dorothy is pregnant, he will never get any penny from Dorothy's father. Regarding the problem that the writer found in the novel, she will discuss more about selfishness in this section.

According to Alonso (1939:221) explained about stubbornness in chapter II we will understand more by analyzing the quotation below:

“I don’t care. ‘she said earnestly. ‘do you think I care?’”

”But I do, Dorrie, ‘his hand began moving gently on her back again. Not for me. I sweat to god not for me. But for you. What will happen to us? We’ll both have to quit school; you for the baby, me to work. And what will I do? – another guy with two years’ college and no degree. What will I be? A clerk? Or an oiler in some textile mill or something?’” (Levin, 1953:5)

From the quotation above we can interpret that the stubbornness is happened to Bud Corliss when he rejects what Dorothy wants. He don’t want to marry Dorothy because he is not loving her, unless her money. He keep act like a gentle man when talk to Dorothy because he want Dorothy to kill their baby so he can take a benefit from that moment to take Dorothy’s money. He kept stubborn to kill that baby because it will block him to his personal interest. The following quotation will give us another example about stubbornness that is generated from Dorothy as the protagonist in Ira Levin’s novel.

b. Rebels

A rebellion originates from a sentiment of indignation and disapproval of a situation and then manifests itself by the refusal to submit or to obey the authority responsible for this situation. And the culprit is called a rebel, people who have a selfish nature is very difficult to be managed by others. And when he has a great will, he will not hesitate to break all the existing rules in order to achieve his goals. There are some way to express that someone is selfish, it is like a man who won’t clear something he know that it is wrong but he keep stay to his decide and stand strong on his line about anything he trusted. Here some example from this novel to show it:

“He spoke with cook authority: “if you refuse to take them, Dorothy, you’re being stubborn, unrealistic, and unfair. Unfair more to yourself than to me” (Levin, 1953:47)

This quotation above tell us that Corliss tell Dorothy that what she do is unrealistic and involve herself in the problem more than him, all of these things Dorothy does is merely to satisfy herself, doing what she does without caring about the risk, bring them to the trouble more than their problem right now. The fact is, what Corliss want is just the same, it is just his selfishness to fulfill his personal interest, satisfy himself. Ask Dorothy to do

something dangerous for her without caring about the risk that Dorothy would take, even at death.

2. Impacts of American selfishness on Bud Corliss

There are several explanations for impacts of selfishness that reflected America's selfishness based on Levin's *A Kiss Before Dying*. Selfishness leads us to a situation where we only think about things that benefit ourselves, crime becomes the first thing to think about, because it brings pleasure instantly.

a. Greedy

Greed is an uncontrolled longing for increase in the acquisition or use of material gain be it food, money, land, or animate/inanimate possessions; or social value, such as status, or power. Greed has been identified as an undesirable behavior throughout known human history, and the culprit is called greedy.

Selfishness encourages to be greedy, people being greedy because self-interest has no limits. The crime chose to bring happiness instantly. Just like what Corliss did for Dorothy and her sisters, the worst thing that he did for himself is let his heart choose to kill a girl just to be rich. Crime never be a good choice.

"Dorothy" Dettweiler told him. Slowly he said, "you wanted to marry her. For the money. But then she was pregnant. You knew you wouldn't get the money. You killed her" (Levin, 1953:265)

Dettweiler dictates every crime Corliss committed against Dorothy. Aware that every crime he did has been known by Dettweiler, certainly Corliss is afraid and shocked, his greediness brings him to a place where he becomes a murderer because his self-interest has no limits and his brain helps him to think the easier way to make his dream come true, even if it is a bad choice, being a murderer.

b. Deception

Deception is an act or statement which misleads, hides the truth, or promotes a belief, concept, or idea that is not true. It is often done for personal gain or advantage. Deception can involve dissimulation, propaganda, and sleight of hand, as well as distraction, camouflage, or concealment. There is also self-deception, as in bad faith. It can also be called, with varying subjective implications, beguilement, deceit, bluff, mystification, ruse, or subterfuge. Another kind of selfishness that shows in this novel is deception. Most people expect friends, relational partners, and even strangers to be truthful most of the time. If people expected most conversations to be untruthful, talking and communicating with others would require distraction and misdirection to acquire

reliable information. The following quotation will give us more understanding about what is the impact of being selfish.

“well, listen, I didn’t want to tell you before, but they might hurt a little” she said nothing. He continued “Hermy said you’ll probably throw up, like before. And you might get a sort of burning sensation in your throat and some pains in your stomach. Whatever happens, don’t get frightened. It’ll just mean that the pills are working. Don’t call anyone.” He paused, waiting for her to say something, but she was silent. “I’m sorry I didn’t tell you before, but you know it” a pause. “you’re not angry with me, are you, Dorrie?”

“no.”

“you’ll see, it’ll all be for the best.” “I know, I am sorry I was stubborn”

“that’s all right, baby. Don’t apologize”

(Levin, 1953:49)

From that we read about deception above we know that Corliss so depress because of Dorothy’s pregnancy, especially when he knows the truth that Dorothy’s father will never give consent for their relationship, about their school, his job after marriage and more problem that would come after. He gives pills to kill the baby even if he knows that it might kill Dorothy either. Being a murderer is not the solution but think about a thousand problems caused by the baby, he is desperate to kill his own child, even Dorothy; her lover.

4. CONCLUSIONS

After analyzed and discussed about causes of Bud Corliss to be selfish and impacts of American Selfishness reflected in the novel *A Kiss Before Dying* by Ira Levin. The conclusions can be drawn as follows.

1. There are two causes Bud Corliss to be selfish. The first is Stubborn and the second is Rebels. It shows when Bud Corliss asked Dorothy to take the pills to kill their baby and finally kill Dorothy and her sisters. Generally Bud Corliss is very difficult to be managed by others. And when he has a great will, he will not hesitate to break all the existing rules in order to achieve his goal.
2. There are two impacts of American selfishness on Bud Corliss based on this novel. First is Greedy and the second is Deception. Shows that Bud Corliss makes others as tools and objects to fulfill his self-interest, kills Dorothy and her sister for money. Then he lied to cover up his mistake,

there are many deceptions he did, he lied to Dorothy about his promise to marry her, lie to everyone to look him like an innocent man to make him rich.

Selfishness brings Bud Corliss to a state self destruction, deception and killing is the best way to help him to be rich. Based on this novel, selfishness made Corliss kill more than one person, it just for money. He wants to be rich and that selfishness leads him to do crime, lying to save his life but in the end, this selfishness brings him to self destruction, death.

5. REFERENCES

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