

# **ALTRUISTIC BEHAVIOR FOUND IN ROBERT BEATTY'S *SERAFINA AND THE BLACK CLOAK***

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## **ABSTRACT**

This study aims to find out the causes and the effects of altruistic behaviors that appear in Robert Beatty's *Serafina and the Black Cloak* novel. The researcher uses the psychological approach of literature in the study to find out how altruistic behaviors in the characters have some effects on the society and the characters. In conducting the research, qualitative research method is applied. Some quotations of the novel will be added to support the analysis. Based on the results of the study, there are five causes of altruistic behaviors that belong to environmental cause and social norms of altruistic behavior. Where there are causes, there are effects. Five effects of altruistic behavior which have good impacts on some characters and the social life are also found. Each character gets his/her happiness, affection, and welfare because of the effects caused by altruistic behaviors. The society also gets the welfare and physical warmth of altruistic behaviors of the novel's characters.

**Keywords:** *altruistic behavior, causes, effects.*

## ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui sebab dan akibat dari perilaku altruistik yang muncul dalam novel *Serafina and the Black Cloak* karya Robert Beatty. Peneliti menggunakan pendekatan psikologis sastra dalam penelitian ini untuk mengetahui bagaimana perilaku altruistik dalam karakter dapat memberikan efek pada masyarakat dan karakter. Dalam melakukan penelitian ini, metode penelitian kualitatif digunakan. Beberapa kutipan dalam novel ditambahkan untuk mendukung analisa. Berdasarkan hasil penelitian, ditemukan lima penyebab perilaku altruistik dimana disebabkan oleh penyebab lingkungan dan norma sosial dalam perilaku altruistik. Dimana ada penyebab pasti juga ada efek yang ditimbulkan. Lima efek dalam perilaku altruistik yang mana memiliki dampak yang baik pada beberapa karakter dan kehidupan sosial juga ditemukan. Masing-masing karakter mendapatkan kebahagiaan, kasih sayang, dan kesejahteraannya karena efek yang disebabkan oleh perilaku-perilaku altruistik. Masyarakat juga mendapatkan kesejahteraan dan kehangatan fisik dari perilaku altruistik pada karakter dalam novel.

**Kata Kunci:** *perilaku altruistik, penyebab, efek.*

## INTRODUCTION

According to K.R Monroe, altruistic behavior is an action carried out to benefit others, even when this action risks a sacrifice the welfare of the altruist (2001:415-418). On the other hands, this act of altruistic behavior causes people to endanger their own health and well-being in order to help others. Such behavior is often carried out selflessly, expecting nothing in return (Cherry, 2018:1).

Altruistic behavior can be found in Robert Beatty's novel entitled *Serafina and the Black Cloak*. This novel tells the story of a 12-year-old girl who has a high spirit of adventure, is not afraid of anything, and is filled with a mysterious world. In Biltmore Estate occurs the tragedy of many missing children at that

time. It both challenges Serafina and empathizes with what happens to the Biltmore Estate. Serafina's identity is unknown to anyone because her father forbids her from being seen by others since it threatens her life and her father's job. She is trying hard to find a way so that she can save the mysteriously missing children. While the children in the Biltmore Estate are missing one by one, only Serafina knows that the Man in the Black Cloak has taken them.

The researcher is interested in studying altruistic behavior from the *Serafina and the Black Cloak* novel by Robert Beatty because the storyline of the novel is not easily guessed by the readers and is very interesting. From this altruistic behaviors study can give insight for the readers about how important altruistic behavior is and it can affect a person's and social life. Altruistic behavior gives benefits including can relieve negative feelings, give happiness, and welfare.

## **OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

Based on the problem of the introduction above, there are two objectives of the study:

1. To analyze the causes of the characters' altruistic behavior in Beatty's *Serafina and the Black Cloak*.
2. To analyze the effects of the characters' altruistic behavior in Beatty's *Serafina and the Black Cloak*.

## **THEORETICAL REVIEW**

### **Altruistic Behavior Theory**

Altruistic behavior is an unselfish action that is willing to sacrifice one's own health and well-being to help others. It is because of a pure desire from within, not because it is based on reasons of duty, religion, or loyalty (Cherry, 2018:1). Another theory of altruistic behavior is the role of parents to their children. Regarding Sober and Wilson's theory about reliability, parents have psychologically altruistic and hedonistic behavior. They only care about the welfare of their children. They feel good when their children do well and feel bad

when their children do ill. A natural instinct carried out for the sake of their children supports this argument (Sober and Wilson, 1998:12).

### **Causes of Altruistic Behavior**

There are five categories of causes why altruistic behavior exists: biological cause, neurological cause, environmental cause, social norms, and cognitive cause. Cherry stated that altruistic behavior with biological cause is about kin selection, which someone help others because of the relation of blood relatives for support gene transmission of future generations (2018:2). Altruistic behavior with neurological cause is based on pleasure and reward centers in the brain become active. That altruistic behavior is associated with the reflection of the brain, someone feels happy after she/he helps other people (Cherry, 2018:2).

According to Knafo-Noam (2009:3), environmental cause happens when someone see what is happening in the surrounding environment so that she/he helps others. Altruistic behavior in environmental cause is also about relations and relationships with other people. Someone helps others because they know that person (Cherry, 2018:2). Cherry explained that social norms cause happens when someone does altruistic behavior because of rules, norms, and expectation of society (2018:2). Another one of the causes above is cognitive cause. Cognitive cause happens when someone does altruistic behavior based on unclear cognitive incentives, such as people want to relieve their own distress or they want to be seen as a kind and emphatic person, and so on (Cherry, 2018:2).

### **Effects of Altruistic Behavior**

The effects of altruistic behavior are for the physical and mental health. It benefits include reducing feelings of depression, give happiness, and increasing well-being (Krueger, Hicks, & McGue, 2001 in Post, Stephen G., 2005:68). Altruistic behavior also has an impact on physical warmth, which is a basic human need. Physical warmth can lead to evaluations and interpersonal behavior. Physical warmth increases trusting behavior (Kang, et al, 2011 in Hu, Li, Jia &

Xie, 2016:2). Such behavior is conceptually considered as interpersonal warmth in social life.

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

In this study, the researcher uses extrinsic approach. The extrinsic approach is to analyze the background of the main characters in the novel related to psychology. This study uses the psychological approach of literature as it helps to find out how altruistic behaviors in the characters have some effects on the society and the characters. This study is classified into qualitative method because it used a description data from novel *Serafina and the Black Cloak*. The researcher used statements and events in the novel that were related to the problems.

The data in this study are taken from a written work, a novel. The novel is one of Robert Beatty's works entitled *Serafina and the Black Cloak* which consists of thirty one chapters with a total of two hundred ninety-two pages for the object of this research as the primary data source. The researcher also gets some data from some journals academic, electronic books, and other written materials as a secondary data source to complete the data. After the data are collected, the researcher identifies what causes of altruistic behavior that appears in the *Serafina and the Black Cloak* novel. After finding the causes of altruistic behavior, the researcher also identifies what effects of altruistic behavior that appears in the *Serafina and the Black Cloak* novel. The researcher uses Content Analysis Techniques in analyzing the data in this study. By using the Content Analysis method, it will obtain an understanding of the various contents of the sources of the data with objectively, systematic, and relevant.

## **RESULT OF THE ANALYSIS**

The researcher finds five causes belong to environmental cause and social norms. The results of the analysis belong to environmental cause as the following: The first cause is when a mechanic saves baby Serafina. Her birth is very mysterious which located in the darkness of the forest and suddenly appears in the road among the bushes with other three creatures. The three of them are dead and

only one is alive, named Serafina. The mechanic grabs her into his jacket and nurtures her as his biological child. Even though baby Serafina has been rejected by midwives many times because she is very tiny, curled into a little ball, and seems like near to death, but the mechanic does not give up. He tries hard to help baby Serafina. Several days later, baby Serafina opens her eyes for the first time, her father is very happy. This proves the altruistic role of parents to their children. Parents will be happy when they see their child is doing well but sad when they see their child is getting ill. Serafina's father is delighted when he finds out that the baby is really alive, just like a biological father in general to his biological child. When Serafina looks at her father's face, there he realizes that the baby is his and the father belongs to the baby.

The second cause is when Serafina is ten years old and asks his father what she can do for Biltmore Estate. In accordance with the Biltmore Estate which has many rodents wander anytime, her father wants her to be a Chief Rat Catcher, there is no one can do it better than Serafina. She accepts it and very happy to do her new job, even though unpaid, it is just for Biltmore's welfare. This is an initial seed of her high altruistic behavior.

The third cause is when Serafina helps Braeden from the Man in the Black Cloak. Everyone does not know her, she wanders around Biltmore Estate secretly, but one day when she is wandering Biltmore to catch rats, suddenly she collides into a big man, named Mr. Crankshod. In that day, Mr. Crankshod, Braeden, and Nolan want to go to Asheville, with a purpose to make Braeden safe from the tragedy occurs in Biltmore Estate, where many children are missing one by one. Serafina introduces herself as a new shoeshine polisher, then Braeden asks her to come along with them because Braeden does not have time to wait until his shoes polished. Unfortunately, an accident happens in the woods, suddenly Mr. Crankshod mysteriously disappears, and then the Man in the Black Cloak comes in order to grab Braeden, but Nolan immediately blocks him by jumping in front of Braeden. Nolan is caught by the man and disappears in an instant. Putting all his power and expanding his size, the man tries to grab Braeden again. Braeden is in shock, stares at the Man in the Black Cloak, unable to move. Without a second

thought, Serafina steps forward while screaming madly, and attacks at the man with her hands and feet. The Man in the Black Cloak disappears and they safe.

The fourth cause is when Braeden helps Serafina to search evidence of the Man in the Black Cloak. It belongs to environmental cause and also social norms. Environmental cause is as Braeden is deeply disturbed by what is happening at his Biltmore mansion: many things are going wrong with the disappearance of many children one by one. Social norms, especially the norm of reciprocity is when Braeden feels he has to do something to repay Serafina's kindness where at that time she helped him in the forest. The key is they must find the black cloak. They start to do secret investigation around Biltmore Estate. The results of their secret investigation, there is nothing suspicious about the items they find there. However, Serafina has a strong analysis leads to the most suspicious one of the Biltmore guests, Mr. Thorne.

The fifth cause belongs to environmental cause when Serafina againsts the Man in the Black Cloak. After the secret investigation, Serafina discuss about Mr. Thorne with Braeden, because Braeden as the nephew of the Biltmore's owners know his guests a lot. Mr. Thorne has many capabilities, such as, he is good at playing music, he is proficient in law, he has capability in Russian language where he is a Southern Carolina, he is smart in playing chess even can beat Braeden's uncle who is the smartest in playing chess, and he understands to fix dynamo machine at Biltmore even when all of the mechanics of the Biltmore cannot fix it. Strangely, he always wears gloves when playing music or in anytime even when the weather is hot. He is the most suspicious guest.

As the Chief Rat Catcher, Serafina exactly knows that to defeat Mr. Thorne, the Man in the Black Cloak is by bait. She becomes bait by make over her appearance as beautiful as a proper young lady. With a dress from Braeden, she is ready to start the battle with the man. Serafina attracts him into the forest. In the forest, she indirectly asks a help to the catamount mother lion by enter her den. Serafina and two cubs lion hide in the root of a big tree. Immediately, the man comes, then the catamount mother lion screams madly because there is an intruder

in her den, and attacks the man furiously until he dies. Serafina's strategy is successful. She did it and the Man in the Black Cloak dies.

Then, the researcher also finds five effects caused by the altruistic behaviors. The first effect is when Serafina survives and she grows-up well. She feels affection, happiness, and welfare because her father let her alive. Even though she is forbidden to be seen by other people, because it will threat her life and also her father's job, she has a high imagination, high adventurous spirit, and loves read books. It means she grows-up well like other children in common. She gets her physical health as well. The second effect is when the Man in the Black Cloak is defeated. The fierce battle between Serafina and the man yields great results for the well-being of the Biltmore society. With her idea to lure the Man in the Black Cloak into the Catamount Lion's den, he falls down.

The third effect is when all people are popping up in the forest. They become free because of the altruistic behavior of Serafina. Some are trapped in black cloak prison for months, and some for years. However, Serafina's victory gives the welfare of society. There is physical warmth to the people. They are already saved and can live like they are meant to. The fourth effect is when Serafina's mother appears. Leandra, Serafina's biological mother, is also trapped in this black cloak prison. After years of being separated and never seeing each other, now Leandra and Serafina can meet again and see each other to find many similarities between the two of them. This certainly makes Leandra very happy because she can see her beloved child who is still alive, growing healthy, and very beautiful, perfect for her. This proves the altruistic role of parents to their children.

The fifth effect is Serafina's acceptance in society. Her altruistic behavior not only gives the welfare of the society and she can find her biological mother, but she also has no more reason to hide her identity and whereabouts. She is respected by many people and Mr. and Mrs. Vanderbilt, the owners of the Biltmore Estate as well. It is a precious time when she can talk heart to heart with the Vanderbilts. Physical warmth in social life engages with trusting behavior. Not only she has an acceptance from society and the Vanderbilts, but also she gets

the favor from the Vanderbilts. The Vanderbilts give her and her father facilities for their daily life and her job as a Chief Rat Catcher becomes official now.

## CONCLUSION

Some reasons that cause altruistic behavior exist are Biological Cause, Neurological Cause, Environmental Cause, Social Norms, and Cognitive Cause. The researcher found five causes belong to environmental cause and social norms, and finds five effects belong to physical health and physical warmth that appear from characters. Some causes of altruistic behavior are when the mechanic saves baby Serafina even though she is not his biological daughter, Serafina accepts a job as Chief Rat Catcher for Biltmore Estate's welfare, Serafina saves Braeden from the Man in the Black Cloak, Braeden helps Serafina to search evidence of the Man in the Black Cloak because of reciprocal norms, and Serafina againsts the Man in the Black Cloak regard to prosocial behavior. Besides that, the effects of altruistic behavior are when Serafina is alive and growing up well, the Man in the Black Cloak is defeated, all people are free, Serafina's mother appears, and Serafina's acceptance in society. At the end of the story, everyone is feeling happy because of the Man in the Black Cloak dies, and all people can live normally. Altruistic behavior that contains in this novel influenced the social welfare and the characters.

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