

# THE MORAL VALUES IN GABRIELLE ZEVIN'S THE STORIED LIFE OF A.J. FIKRY

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# THE MORAL VALUES IN GABRIELLE ZEVIN'S THE STORIED LIFE OF A.J. FIKRY

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## ABSTRACT

The study is focused on the moral values in Gabrielle Zevin's *The Storied Life of A.J Fikry* and how the moral values influence the main. The object of this study was *The Storied Life of A.J Fikry* novel. The data on this study are the sentences in *The Storied Life of A.J Fikry* novel that contain moral values. The research method used is qualitative method and Hornby's theory on moral values. The result of the study shows that there are eight kinds of moral values in Gabrielle Zevin's *The Storied Life of A.J Fikry*. They are bravery, honesty, steadfastness, sympathetic to other, cooperativeness, trustworthiness, sincerity, and love and affection. Based on the study, it is also found that the moral values in Gabrielle Zevin's *The Storied Life of A.J. Fikry* have influenced the main character A.J. to become a happier, caring, more patient, and a loving person.

**Keywords:** Moral value, Main character

## INTRODUCTION

Moral values are values related to good and bad behavior pushed by aware need that are the rules for human life. Moral values additionally outline what is socially acceptable. According to Sorley (2014: 519) states that moral values are a full view of the worth of life must take all values into account, not merely those which, from their specific reference to character and volition. Moral values are the beliefs and values of people that conform to normal standards of what is right and wrong and deals with people (Susana, 2018). Moral values are at play when a person interacts with the world or

has to make decisions that will impact others. Learning moral values is important. Firstly, learning moral value can help people to build good relationships in their society. Moral values can also be a foundation to a person's thrives in life. Secondly, it can increase one's sensitivity to feel values and implicit information. By understanding moral values, people can be more emotionally intelligent.

In the novel entitled *The Storied Life of A.J Fikry* written by Gabrielle Zevin, the author wants to make readers wonder about what will happen in A.J Fikry's life

after the death of his wife and the finding of a mysterious package at the bookstore, whether he is able to pass the lowest point or just give up in his life. This study will focus on the moral values contained in the novel and how they influence the main character, which hopefully can be a valuable lesson for both the writer and the readers.

The reason behind the choosing of Gabrielle Zevin's novel *The Storied Life Of A.J Fikry* is because there has been no other person who has conducted a research on moral values found in this novel. This is an interesting analysis because in our daily life, moral values also play an important role. Moral values are people's guidelines to decide which is right and wrong. Therefore, people need to learn moral values to be human beings with quality useful for the surrounding society. That is why the title "The Moral Value In Gabrielle Zevin's *The Storied Life Of A.J Fikry*" is chosen for this thesis.

The thesis writer also uses moral values theory by Hornby (2010) as approach to analyze this research. According Hornby, there are eleven kinds of moral values, such as the bravery, humbleness, honesty, cooperativeness, thankfulness, steadfastness, sympathetic to other, cooperativeness, trustworthiness, kind-hearted, love and affection. These are suitable with the topic of this thesis because the topic of the study concerns with moral values found in *The Storied Life Of A.J Fikry* and how the moral values influence the main character.

The previous study related to this research is "Moral Lessons In Mitch

Albom's *The Five People You Meet In Heaven*" written by Effine Prasticha from Universitas 17 Agustus 1945 Surabaya in 2014. The thesis deal with the analysis of moral lessons found in Mitch Albom's *The Five People You Meet in Heaven*. The study uses intrinsic approach to analyze the novel *The Five People You Meet in Heaven* presents the experience of life on heaven and earth. The main character, Eddie, interacts with the five people that he meets in heaven. The five people help him to find the meaning of life. The writer has concluded that there are twelve moral lessons in the novel: bravery, enthusiasm, honesty, kindhearted, love and affection, peace-loving, loyalty, perseverance, strong belief, sacrifice, self-confidence, sincerity. The study is expected to give contribution for the readers to enrich their knowledge who study literature that this study can be the references for English Department students who study about moral values in literary work.

1. What are the moral values found in Gabrielle Zevin's *The Storied Life of A.J Fikry*?
2. How do the moral values influence the main character in the Gabrielle Zevin's *The Storied Life of A.J Fikry*?

## RESEARCH METHOD

This study uses research methods, because in this study the data is take in the form of sentences. Descriptive method is one of the type of research method that is use to explore about setting social, social phenomenon by reporting a unit that related to a problem examined in the study. The purpose of this study uses descriptive methods is to accurately describe a present information and create categories and classify research subjects in this study. The data sources in this study in the novel entitled *The Storied Life Of A.J. Fikry* on 2014. The

novel is 272 pages. This study only focus on moral values and how the moral values influence the main character in Gabrielle Zevin's *The Storied Life of A.J Fikry*.

## DATA ANALYSIS

The moral values in Gabrielle Zevin's *The Storied Life of A.J. Fikry*. The discussion is divided into two subchapters. The first subchapter discusses about moral values in Gabrielle Zevin's *The Storied Life of A.J. Fikry*, and the second subchapter discusses about how the moral values influence the main characters in Gabrielle Zevin's *The Storied Life of A.J. Fikry*. All of this study using Hornby (2010) theory to analyze and describe how the moral values in the novel.

## MORAL VALUES

### 1. Bravery

The writer finds the bravery value in *The Storied Life of A.J. Fikry* novel in the following quotation.

"She wanted me to have this child, you see. It was her last wish. I think it's only right that I should keep her. I don't want her moved into some foster home when she has a perfectly good home right here. I Googled the matter last night." (Zevin, 2014: 38)

In the quotation above, A.J is brave to take the responsibility of Maya with his willingness to adopt Maya. A.J. feel worried about Maya's condition who will be placed in a temporary foster if no family adopts her. Although the social worker convinces A.J. that Maya will be safe there, A.J. insists on defending Maya by showing a note left by Maya's

biological mother. In quotation "She wanted me to have this child " A.J. believes that it is best to keep Maya. He does not want Maya to be with a foster family while he can provide a proper place for Maya to grow up. Then in the quotation "I Googled the matter last night" A.J showed his responsibility towards Maya by finding out what things a toddler her age needs.

### 2. Honesty

Honesty value is found in *The Storied Life of A.J. Fikry* novel. One example is in the following quotation.

"I told her that I don't even like them and that I was pretty sure we had gone to Rhode Island to see her that time." (Zevin, 2014: 81-82)

In the quotation above, the writer found honesty value, Maya tells A.J the truth that she has told Amelia about the topiaries. It can be seen in quotation "I told her that I don't even like them and that I was pretty sure we had gone to Rhode Island to see her that time" This makes Amelia know that A.J is only making excuses to visit Amelia who is sick in Rhode Island.

I go out to the living room to clean up the mess, and I wipe everything down, and the last thing I do, without even really thinking about it, is I slip the book into my bag. (Zevin, 2014: )

In the quotation above, the writer found honesty value Ismay tells Lambiase honestly about how a Temerlane book could feel at home. It starts with the arrival of Marian Wallace when Ismay is five months pregnant to ask for funds so she could start a new life with her two-

year old daughter. Maya is Daniel's daughter while sleeping with Marian Wallace. Then Ismay thinks of a way to get the funds that Marian Wallace wants. One night Ismay visits A.J. and find A.J drunk. At that time A.J. has lost the will to live and decided to spend his life drunk as can be seen in the quotation "my sister had been dead for over a year, and her husband was steadily drinking himself to death.". Then in the quotation "Cheap bastard never would have been at that estate sale if not for me." Ismay thinks that A.J. wouldn't have had something as valuable as the Temerlane book if it weren't for her. After that Ismay takes A.J. to bed, cleans and sweeps the living room floor. After all that she has done, she tucks Tamerlane's book into her bag.

### **3.Steadfastness**

The steadfastness value in *The Storied Life of A.J.Fikry* novel is shown in the following quotation.

"Friedman gets at something specific about what it is to lose someone. How it isn't one thing. He writes about how you lose and lose and lose." (Zevin, 2014: 58)

In the quotation above, the writer found steadyness value A.J. bravely remembers Nic's death. He feels that Friedman writes something specific about losing someone. It can be seen in quotation "Friedman gets at something specific about what it is to lose someone. How it isn't one thing. He writes about how you lose and lose and lose.". From that quotation A.J. has let go of all the events that befell Nic and A.J. no longer

blames himself for his wife's death. It can be concluded as A.J.'s steadyness.

### **4.Sympathetic**

The sympathetic value in *The Storied Life of A.J. Fikry* novel is found in the following quotation.

"No. It's fine," A.J. says. "Doesn't seem right to keep a baby in a police station." (Zevin, 2014:29)

The quotation above shows A.J.'s sympathy to Maya because he thinks that living in the police station is not right for the baby. It can be seen in quotation "Doesn't seem right to keep a baby in a police station." A.J. refuses the police's offer to leave Maya at the police station. And if there is something he needs, A.J. calls his sister-in-law for help or google the other thing they do not know. So, A.J. takes this responsibility to take care of Maya in the weekend. Everything A.J. for Maya really because he cares for Maya.

### **5. Cooperatve**

The cooperative value in *The Storied Life of A.J. Fikry* novel is shown in the following quotation.

"They make the publisher clean up after readings?" the woman asks. Amelia laughs. "No. I'm the bookstore owner's girlfriend, too. I'm helping out for the day." (Zevin, 2014:88)

In the quotation above, the writer found cooperativeness value, Amelia helps A.J. run events in the bookstore when A.J still deals with unpleasant events on the show. In the quotation "No. I'm the bookstore owner's girlfriend, too. I'm helping out for the day." Shows Amelia cooperativeness as a partner in business

also as A.J.'s girlfriend. She is willing to clean up the bookstore.

## 6. Trustworthiness

The trustworthiness value in *The Storied Life of A.J. Fikry* novel is shown in the following quotation.

I want her to grow up to be a reader. I want her to grow up in a place with books and among people who care about those kinds of things. I love her very much, but I can no longer take care of her. The father cannot be in her life, and I do not have a family that can help. I am desperate. Yours, Maya's Mother (Zevin, 2014: 27-28)

In the quotation above, the writer found trustworthiness value, Maya's biological mother has trusted A.J through a letter that she slips in Elmo's hand along with Maya. In the quotation "I want her to grow up in a place with books and among people who care about those kinds of things." shows that Maya's mother wants her child to grow up in a book-loving environment. At the same time entrusting Maya to a man who lives in a bookstore. A.J. got that mysterious package when leaving the house to exercise.

## 7. Sincerity

The sincerity value in *The Storied Life of A.J. Fikry* novel is shown in the following quotation.

"As I was saying before, I don't believe in fate. But I do feel a sense of responsibility toward her. That young woman did leave her in my care." (Zevin, 2014: 34-35)

In the quotation above, the writer found sincerity value, Lambiase reminds A.J. that A.J does not need to defend Maya. In the quotation "As I was saying

before, I don't believe in fate. But I do feel a sense of responsibility toward her." shows that A.J. very sincerely feels responsible for Maya because of the notes left by Maya's biological mother. In addition, A.J. feels worried about Maya's life if handed over to a foster family.

## 8. Love and Affection

The affection value in *The Storied Life of A.J. Fikry* novel is shown in the following quotation.

How does a father go about cleaning a two-year-old girl's private parts without being a pervert?; how high to fill tub—toddler; <sup>12</sup>how to prevent a two-year-old from accidentally drowning in tub; general rules for bath safety, and so on. (Zevin, 2014: 35)

In the quotation above, A.J. shows affection towards Maya by taking care of all the necessities. He even learns about the protocol for bathing a 2-year-old child to prevent something unwanted from happening. It can be seen in "It takes A.J. several Google searches to determine bathing protocol" A.J. is very careful, especially about the private part and things that might be happen to the baby with her age. A.J.'s treatment of Maya shows the love of a father for his child.

## How Moral values influence main character

### 1. A.J. become a happier person

A.J. becomes a happier person is shown in a few occasions since he adopts Maya. One of them is the following quotation: "I'm okay," A.J. says. He realizes that he hasn't thought about

Tamerlane or Nic for hours. (Zevin, 2014: 31)

In the quotation above, A.J.'s sympathy to Maya makes him bring Maya to his house for several days before the social worker comes and picks her up. For a moment A.J. does not think about his stolen Tamerlane or about Nic's death, as if Maya makes him forget the biggest burden in his life.

### **2. A.J. become a caring person**

A.J. becomes a caring person is shown in a few occasions contained in the quotation below.

The story shows how the moral values have turned A J into a caring person. It is shown in the following quotation: "I'm not obligated to turn her over when it's the mother's wish that I should have her," A.J. explains (Zevin, 2014: 38).

In the quotation above, Marian Wallace's trustworthiness to A.J. even though she never meets A.J. in person. That trustworthiness makes A.J. feel sympathy and take care of Maya for a few days so that his relationship with Maya becomes closer which makes A.J. increasingly concerned and worried about how and where Maya will live. Then he tells the social worker that he has the right to take care of Maya because Maya's biological mother also wants it.

### **3. A.J. becomes patient person**

A.J. becomes more patient is shown in a few occasions contained in the quotation below.

He knows about the post visit clucking and decides not to let it annoy him. He leaves a jug of Purell on the counter next to a sign that commands PLEASE DISINFECT BEFORE

HANDLING THE INFANTA. (Zevin, 2014: 40)

In the quotation above, the sympathy of mothers in Alice Island to his daughter does not make A J mad or uncomfortable. A.J. gets more patient than before he adopts Maya. He does not really care about the advice that the mothers give. He accepts the gift and makes a sign for the mothers to disinfect before taking care of Maya.

### **4. A.J becomes a loving person**

A.J. becomes a loving person is shown in a few occasions contained in the quotation below.

What a bother. It's completely gotten in the way of his plan to drink himself to death, to drive his business to ruin. The most annoying thing about it is that once a person gives a shit about one thing, he finds he has to start giving a shit about everything. (Zevin, 2014: 43)

In the quotation above, A.J.'s bravery to take responsibility of Maya makes Lambiase suggest A.J. a party to introduce Maya as his daughter. A.J. agrees with his friend's suggestion. During the celebration, A.J. sees Maya wearing a pink dress then feels something tickle her. In the quotation "he feels a vaguely familiar, slightly intolerable bubbling inside of him." can be described as A.J's feeling of affection towards Maya that he had never felt before. Then A.J. realizes that he really loves Maya regardless of his plan to waste his life. Now A.J. finds that he has to take care of and raise Maya. This is a love that makes him start his life again.

## CONCLUSION

The results of research on moral values in *The Storied Life Of A.J. Fikry* novel written by Gabrielle Zevin lead several conclusions. There are eight moral values are found in *The Storied Life Of A.J. Fikry* novel written by Gabrielle Zevin. The values are Bravery, Honesty, Steadfastness, Sympathetic to others, Cooperativeness, Trustworthiness, sincerity, Love and Affection. Moral values found in Gabrielle Zevin's *The Storied Life of A.J Fikry* have influenced the main character A.J. become a happier person, caring, more patient, and a loving person.

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