



**AMERICAN INDIVIDUALISM OF TIM
THOMAS IN *SEVEN POUNDS* MOVIE BY
GABRIELE MUCCINO**

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Submitted by:

FITROTUL HIDAYATI

NIM: A2B008121

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American Individualism Value of Tim Thomas In Seven Pounds Movie

Oleh Fitrotul Hidayati

Fakultas Ilmu Budaya Universitas Diponegoro

ABSTRACT

Individualisme Amerika sudah ada di Amerika sejak negara Amerika ditemukan, dan sudah menjadi ciri khas negara tersebut. Maka dari itu penulis bermaksud untuk menganalisis individualisme Amerika melalui karakter Tim Thomas dalam film “*Seven Pounds*” karya Gabriele Muccino. Penulis akan menganalisis individualisme yang di jalani oleh Tim untuk bertanggung jawab atas kesalahannya di masa lalu, sesuai dengan kehendaknya sendiri. Individualisme yang dijalankan Tim Thomas mencakup nilai-nilai individualisme Amerika yaitu *self-Autonomy*, dan *self-responsibility*. Penulis juga akan membahas kehidupan sosial Tim Thomas berhubungan dengan individualisme yang dijalani oleh Tim Thomas dalam menghadapi sahabatnya Dan Morris dan juga saudaranya Ben Thomas yang tidak setuju dengan keputusan tersebut.

Dalam metode penelitian, penulis menggunakan metode penelitian kepustakaan. Dan untuk metode pendekatan penulis menggunakan metode pendekatan eksponensial untuk membahas unsur intrinsik, dan teori tentang Individualisme Amerika dalam menganalisis aspek intrinsik. Dalam pembahasan, penulis menggabungkan analisis intrinsik dan ekstrinsik. Sumber-sumber yang digunakan dalam metode kepustakaan adalah buku, jurnal, dan juga sumber-sumber yang di dapat melalui situs internet. Dalam membahas unsur intrinsik, penulis menggabungkan elemen eksponensial (Karakter, Latar, dan konflik) dan unsur sinematografi, yang bertujuan untuk memberikan pembahasan yang sistematis dari unsur eksponensial dan disertakan oleh bukti dari unsur sinematografi. Dan untuk unsur ekstrinsiknya penulis menggunakan teori individualisme Amerika milik Robert N Bellah,

Setelah menganalisis Karakter Tim Thomas, penulis menemukan bahwa Tim berkomitmen untuk menebus kesalahannya di masa lalu yang menyebabkan tujuh orang meninggal dunia, dengan mengambil keputusan yang menurutnya benar (*self-autonomy*), Tim sangatlah bertanggung jawab atas pengambilan keputusannya tersebut, dalam mencari tujuh kandidat, serta bertanggung jawab penuh dalam pencapaian keinginannya tersebut (*self-responsibility*) Tim sangat tahu akan keputusannya dan tetap berinteraksi dengan sangat baik dengan orang-orang yang ada di sekelilingnya, dalam hal ini Tim bisa mencapai nilai-nilai individualismenya yaitu, Tim bisa menopang kehidupan pribadinya, dan juga kehidupannya dengan masyarakat.

A. BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Individualism has already become an identity in American's life. American Individualism is an idea which glorifies human natural freedom to do, to think, and to believe on his own thought with personal responsibility. Since many European left their country and went to America to get their desire without any pressure from others and government, they had to believe on themselves to survive in wilderness and left their lives in Europe. Their determination makes the writer interested to dig deeper about values in American Individualism. Like Emerson states, "What I must do, is all that concerns me, not what people think." (Eduard C, 1954:56). Self reliance's essay by Ralph Waldo Emerson has been considered as one of the most influential thoughts that changed the perspective of Americans to have an independent moral life ever since. Hornsby in *Oxford Advance Learner's Dictionary of Current English* defines individualism as follows: "Individualism is a social theory that favors the free action and complete liberty of belief in individual capacities" (1995:606). The explanation above clarifies that Individualism asserts that an individual can act freely with one own capability to get maximum freedom, to pursue his personal desire and to choose his own way although it is against the wish of his family or society. So an individualist has personal autonomy, personal secret, and appreciation to each other, as well as the responsibility to

personally acceptance the consequences of his own decision.

Individualism has a strong relationship with personal interest, although individualism emphasizes in one's own desire, it cannot be separated at all from society; an individual exists because there are communities. It is different from selfishness, in which an individualist does not respect the society. In American literature about mythic individualism, the story a hero like a cowboy depicts that someone has to listen to his own heart and be a confident. *Habit of the Hearts* explains that "to serve the society one must be able to stand alone, not needing others, not depending on their judgment, and not submitting to their wishes. Yet individualism is not selfishness" (Bellah, 1986:146). An individual lives his life and stands under his own feet and knows what is best for him, because the truth comes from inside and it is not based on others' mind. But, individualism does not mean someone has no interaction with others; an individualist has correlation with society, and people around him.

The writer chooses an American movie to explore about American individualism. A movie can illustrate a story like other literary works, and has the same intrinsic aspects. So, the viewers can grab simply the story from the audio visualization on the movie.

According to Bellah, "Modern individualism emerged out of the struggle against monarchical and aristocratic authority that seemed arbitrary and oppressive to citizens prepare to assert the right to govern themselves" (1986: 142). In

short, each American appeal to the individual exercise of his own understanding to get ultimate personal autonomy, and also followed by responsibility to be an original thinker. He believes that he must believe in his own-self to stand on his own feet and do not let others settle their lives.

The writer comes to the decision to analyze Tim Thomas character in the *Seven Pounds* movie to see American individualism value. This movie tells about Tim's redemption to get out of his mistake. He wants to recoup seven people who die on the crash. He feels that he is the cause of the car crash, and he wants to be responsible for the crash. Tim makes a decision to share happiness with others and find out seven people that really need help. He relies on himself in attaining his destination. His determination to find seven people is his responsibility. He really lives his life to be responsible with himself and also with society. Although there are some obstacles that face him in doing his plan to take responsibility, in the end of the story Tim can achieve his goal. The struggle of Tim Thomas to find seven people in pursuing his private life without forgetting his public life makes the writer choose to analyze the American individualism values in *Seven Pounds* movie.

B. Tim Thomas and his Individualism

Tim Thomas is categorized as a major character in *Seven Pounds*. He gets a serious problem in his life since a fatal crash. The fatal crash makes him deeply depressed. He

finds out that he feels responsible for the crash. Tim struggles to survive from the problem. He wants to be responsible by giving help to the others. He is an individualist. It is indicated by his attitude. He always makes decision by himself. He thinks that he needs redemption because of the serious mistake he made.

Tim still keeps his relationship with people around of him. Following dialogue shows that Tim has a good communication with people around him :

Tim: You look great.

Holly: I do! I feel great (smile) How are you?

Tim: I am really good. I need a favor.

Holly: Whatever you need, just ask me.

Tim: I need a name. Someone in the system, someone have been had really hard time and needs help, but, maybe too proud to ask.

Holly: (really wonder) what are you doing?

Tim: I am Helping. (Silent, and continue to asks) I need a name.

Holly: Okay. (Seven Pounds, 00:38:14-00:39:35)

The conversation above implies Tim's independence. Nevertheless, Tim still keeps his relationship with people around of him. It also shows that he has a good social interaction with people. Indeed, he needs the other to reach his goal. The writer sees how Tim struggles to find the candidates one by one and keeps struggling to pursue his goals. Tim has good social interaction. He can sustain both his private life and public life. The writer sees that Tim Thomas has

Individual-autonomy of American individualism value.

Tim's plan is want to help someone who really needs help. But his candidates have suitable with his criteria.

Emily : Mr. Thomas!

Tim : Yes?

Emily : Why do I get the feeling you do really give a big favor right now?

Tim : Because I get the feeling that you really deserve it. (Silent)

Okay?

Emily :(silent, ad wonder)

Tim: alright,

(Seven Pounds 00:32:0000:32:52)

From the conversation above, we can see that Emily and Tim start to have a relationship as a friend. When Emily is getting faint and she has to be hospitalized she calls Tim. Tim keeps watching Emily in the hospital. Then they are getting closer. Tim knows that Emily is a good person. She is suitable to be his candidates. Finally, Emily accepts Tim's help. It means that Tim is responsible with his plan. In this scene, the writer sees individual-responsibility aspect of American Individualism value.

Ezra is blind. He is one of the candidates who will accept Tim's corneas. He works as meat sales agent. Tim calls Ezra and reprimands him. He does that because he wants to know how patient Ezra is. However Ezra stays calm and he is not easy to get angry. He is not arrogant although another person praises him. He has already accepted Tim's corneas. In the end of the story Ezra speak to Emily who has already received Tim's heart transplantation.

It can be proven by the following dialogue:

Emily : Ezra.

Ezra : Yes. Hi ?? (wondering) are you a parent?

Emily : (buffer to crying on) No

Ezra : We ever meet?

Emily :(silent, an a shake of the head, crying and wondering)

Ezra : Are you okay? (try guess surely) You must be Emily.

Emily : (nodded he head, smile while crying)

Ezra : Nice to meet you.

(Seven Pounds 01:56:03-01:56:54)

From the dialogue above the writer sees implicitly that Ezra and Emily have known each other from the letter sent by Tim. As a result, the writer thinks that Tim can reach his personal goal. Indeed, he cannot stand alone. He needs people to help him. From this analysis, the writer sees that value of American Individualism which consists of individual-autonomy and responsibility truly close to the society. Finally, the writer realizes that individualist cannot be separated at all from social life. In other words, they have close correlation.

The other candidates of Tim is Connie. Connie is a woman with two children. Tim knows from Holly that her son almost killed her last year. Three of her ribs fractured last month. She is really desperate and government cannot do anything. Tim comes to Connie house. He disguises as the IRS worker. Connie is getting afraid and angry with Tim because he knows her problem. Then, Tim gives his card to Connie

Connie : Mr. Thomas, this is Connie Tapos.

*Tim: Hey, Connie ...
 Connie: I do not know why I'm
 calling you but I'm calling you.
 You said you can help us, can you
 really help us?
 (Seven Pounds, 01:01:39-01:01:55)*

Tim's plan to help Connie and give her a happiness with her children can be achieved. This is the letter from Tim to Connie :

*I have always believed this place can heal the soul.
 I hope that proves true for you. When you've signed your name on the dotted line of the contract you'll own my house
 I only ask that you'll never mention how you got the house or try to contact me, for any reason. And if you're wondering "why you" please stop. All I ask is for you to honor my wishes.
 And, of course, live life abundantly.
 (Seven Pounds, 01:03:21-01:04:39)*

There is slow music illustrated in this scene when the monologue above is read by Tim's voice. It builds mood of the viewers that Connie is safe in Tim's house beach. The house is far away from Connie's husband.

The other candidate is George. Tim knows that George is a good person when he stalks George. Tim is upset with himself and he wants to be responsible as the cause of the car accident. As a result, he decides to share happiness with each other. The writer can see in the dialogue below that George is still wondering. He asks Tim why he chooses George as the candidate who receives his kidney. They have not known each other before:

*Tim : I heard that you have raised enough money and you give them to couples kids, praise scholarships past the college.
 George : Yeah, no no, it's not a big deal. I have convinced us up donors that the world needs more many teams is on ice.
 (they are laughing together)
 George : (continue) I keep asking it is, but why me?
 Tim : Because you're a good man.
 George : No, seriously?
 Tim : Even when you do not know people watching you
 (Seven Pounds 00:44:33-00:45:27)*

From the dialogue above, the writer sees that George is Tim's criteria for being the candidate. Tim's criteria is a good person, and George is a kind person and he is a good man. He is concerned about children's education. He gives a scholarship for the children. George is appropriate with Tim's criteria. Through George, Tim can attain his goal one by one. This analysis shows to the writer that Tim's action consists of individual-responsibility Aspect of American Individualism value.

C. Tim's Conflicts which represent Individual-Autonomy and Individual-Responsibility

There are many conflicts that happened in this movie but the writer will only discuss conflicts that have correlation with individualism of Tim Thomas in pursuing his personal goal. Internal conflict is found in the major character, Tim Thomas. In the past, he drives his car with his fiancée. At the same time he checks a

message in his phone. Later, it causes a terrible accident. It brings on seven people died. Tim feels very guilty about the accident. He blames himself all the time. He finds it very difficult to live his life. He wants to help the others by giving his vital organ to them who really need it.

Tim feels haunted because of his mistake which make his car crashed. The following dialogue provides description of Tim Thomas' condition:

Tim : Kenny Anderson, Nicole Anderson, Ali Anderson, Ed Rice, Stephen Philips, Monica Freeman, Sarah Jensen. (Slowly, and continue... become anger)

Kenny Anderson! Nicole Anderson! Ali Anderson! Ed Rice! Stephen Philips! Monica Freeman and Sarah Jensen! (Seven Pounds 00:05:34-00:05:58)

In the scene when the conversation is taken place it is explained that Tim is angry. He cannot believe that the seven people are really died. He feels guilty about the car crash. He tries emphasizing himself about the seven people who are died on that tragedy. He wants to be responsible as the causes of the crash.

From the internal conflict, the writer can see that Tim is an individualist. He chooses his own decision to be responsible with his own way. He wants to go out from his difficulties, and pursues his private goal. As the writer knows, Individualism deals with human freedom to do with his own way and to take responsible with his own decision. The important part is an individualist can nurture his private life and his public life. This means

that each person could pursue his own happiness and purposes and that he would be free to do things with limited interference from other. This means that Americans give high priority to their personal aspiration and also have concern for other people.

D. Individualism as the Cause of External Conflicts

Secondly, the writer will explain the external conflicts in Tim Thomas' life that contains American individualism value. There are many external conflicts which happened. Here, the writer will only explain the external conflicts which have correlation with Tim's life. Those also supports American Individualism in Tim Thomas in searching his candidates.

Conflict Between Tim and Dan Morris Dan wants to persuade Tim to cancel his plan. Conversation below shows Dan who is trying to persuade Tim to cancel his plan.

Dan : What was not true, but I, and he likes more than you

Than me ...So I damn mind because. I was very jealous.

And I realized that I wore.

That lies at the heart of the last 25 years

Tim : Stop! Stop! Stay focused! Do what you promised. Do what you promised!

Dan : You think I'll disappoint you, did you? I know you in my whole damn life! Yes? This is not something doing every day! right?

You is not at all for you or me! We'll have to go all out. According to the plan. Don't worry.

Tim : Thanks

(Seven Pounds: 00:33:56-00:37:48)

Dan tries to persuade Tim to cancel the agreement between them. Tim is angry with Dan. Tim keep forcing Dan to keep their agreement because he is really serious with his decision from the first time. Dan Morris is steady to keep his promises. Dan is worried about Tim's plan. Tim is his best friend and he loves him much. From this external conflict the writer can see Tim's individualism. Tim believes himself and hears his own heart in making decision. It contains aspect individual-autonomy of American Individualism to govern himself and not depending on other person.

The next conflict is between Tim And Stewart. Stewart Goodman is one of Tim's candidates. He works at nursing house. He has medical problem and also has such big debt with the government. He hes not pay tax. His medical problem is leukemia. Therefore, he needs a transplantation of bone marrow. The conflict then happens when Tim wants to help him by giving him an extension to pay taxes. Tim comes to Stewart's office to find information about who Stewart is.

From Inez's explanation it is known that Stewart is not a good person. Inez has ever been molested by Stewart. A conversation below will support picture 4.43 and show how Tim tries to know more about Stewart;

Tim :(excuse sitting down, and sitting beside Inez slowly) I am trying to figure out what kind of man Stewart

Goodman it is?It's in my power. Drastically changes circumstance.

Inez : (begin to listening carefully)

Tim : But I do not want to give a gift, if he doesn't deserve it. I need you to tell me, whether he is not or good person.

Inez : (begin to give a response)

Tim : (smile lovely to Inez)

Inez : (look to Tim curiously and seriously, and then she start writing on the paper) "The drugs he gave me"

Tim:(read..) the drugs he gave me, make me dizzy ??

Inez :(nodded slowly)

Tim : (continue read) I wanna new one

Tim: it was reasonable... What else

Inez? You can trust me... What else

Inez?

Inez :(begin crying, and write again)

Tim :(read again) he is punishing you?

(Seven Pounds, 00:16:32-00:19:32)

Tim knows that Stewart is a bad person. Tim feels he has been lied by Stewart. He can conclude that Stewart is not deserve to receive help. Knows that Stewart has a bad treatment toward Inez Tim is very angry with Stewart. He informs to Stewart that he do not want help him. From that explanation of the dialogue and picture it is seen that Tim really governs his act and listen to his heart. He is serious and careful to take any he needs. Tim relies on himself to get his goal. The writer assumes that Tim's decision represents individual-autonomy from American individualism aspects.

Tim gets information that Connie's husband almost killed her last year and. It causes three of her ribs fractured last month. She is really desperate to complain. The government also cannot do anything. Tim comes to Connie house and disguises as IRS worker. Tim realizes that he knows about her problem from Holly. At first Connie almost believes Tim but then Connie is very afraid with her problems and angry toward Tim. Picture 4.46 below is taken by using close-up and straight on angle to show Connie's face expression when he is angry to Tim and it chases away Tim to left her house.

This conversation proves the act of Tim when he meets Connie:

Tim: Your children are in danger here.

Connie: You don't know what you're talking about.

Tim : You don't have to live like this, I can help you

Connie:You don't know me. Get out of my house now or I'm gonna call the police.

Tim : Okay, okay ...

Coniie : Who are you

Tim : I want you to take my card.

Connie : I don't need your help.

Tim : You can call me anytime. I'm gonna leave it right here.

(Seven Pounds: 00:42:08-00:42:54)

Tim hopes that Connie accepts his help one day. Tim gets trouble in pursuing his aim. Tim keeps struggling to make Connie agree with his plan. And at the end, Connie calls Tim and leaves her house. Tim gives Connie his car to run and gives

his beach house to Connie and her children. Then, Connie lives happily without her husband's disturb. Finally Tim can achieve his aim to help Connie.

Between Tim and Ben Thomas. Ben is angry with Tim. It is because Tim spying on him. Absolutely, it is breaking the IRS' rule. Ben also gets angry with Tim because he steals his IRS Id card. Ben even does not know where Tim lives in.

Ben : Where you live, Tim? Tell me, because I do not even know where my brother live!!

Tim : It's a motel. Five blocks distance. We sit tomorrow morning, I guarantee it, I promise.

Ben : Where are my letters of recommendation? Give me back recommendations.

Tim : Here.. Go home. You have a beautiful family. Go home and enjoy it...

Ben : Tim. What going here? Tell me, who is Emily Possa?

Tim : I'll explain everything tomorrow.

Ben : give me the keys to the car. Do not go anywhere. I'll stay right here.

Tim : As you know I love you...

(Seven Pounds: 01:33:1601:34:47)

The dialogue above happens in front of Emily's house. That scene shows when Ben is angry to Tim because he has already searched Tim a few days before. In this fighting Tim defends himself from Ben's fury. He gives back Ben's ID card. He slowly explains his reason to steal the card to Ben. He knows that his brother loves him. However, he knows exactly what he does, and keeps doing his plans. Tim does not

subject Ben in anger too. He defends and explains that he will give an explanation for Ben Thomas about his plan.

From the conflict between Tim and Ben, the writer sees aspect of American Individualism value, individual-autonomy, when Tim keeps doing his decision for his private and public life. He does not depend on another person help. Even Ben is his brother. This conflict also supports aspect individual-responsibility of Tim Thomas because all of his decision and all of his acts are his responsible. Tim gives back Ben's IRS ID card to Ben. In fact, Tim has thought carefully about his plan, listen his own heart and his desire, with high-responsibility. The writer can conclude that Tim Thomas character in this movie fulfills the aspects of American individualism.

E. CONCLUSION

Seven Pounds movie tells about Tim Thomas' efforts to find seven people that will receive his help because he feels guilty about the car accident. He wants to be responsible with people around him by giving beatitude to seven people. Actually he wants to reedem his wrongness. He starts to maintain his plan and searches his candidates carefully by himself. He wants to give a gift to a person who has patience and really needs his helping.

From the result of the analysis, the writer finds American individualism value in Tim Thomas character. In order to find seven people by himself to reedem his

guilty. The writer sees individual-autonomy of Tim in searching his candidates. He makes his plan without the other's help. He has good responsibility for himself and people around him. At the end of the story Tim can achieve his goal. It is suitable with his plan. This action consists of aspect individual-responsibility. He can sustain both his private and public life in achieving his goal.

Based on these analysis and discussion in *Seven Pounds* Movie the following can be drawn as a conclusion. We can see American individualism value in this movie from the action of its main character, Tim Thomas. Hence, the writer concludes those actions can fit the aspects of individualism, that is self-autonomy and self-responsibility and also capable in sustaining his private life, and public life appropriate individualism from Bellah's perspective.

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