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The Analysis of Moral Values Reflected by the Main Characters in “Eternals” Movie

Kadek Lia Sri Agustini^{1*}, I.B. Gde Nova Winarta²

^{1,2} English Department, Faculty of Foreign Languages, Mahasaraswati Denpasar University,
Kota Denpasar, Bali 80233, Indonesia
E-mail: liasri139@gmail.com, idabagusnova@unmas.ac.id

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ABSTRACT

Literature is an art in the form of writing, but over time, literary works develop and have various forms. Besides being entertaining, literature also contains information and moral values. This study addresses the analysis of moral values in movies. The data used is Eternals movie. Researchers used the content analysis method to analyze the data. The leading theory used to analyze moral values in Eternals movie is Linda and Eyre (1993). The results show that 33 data are categorized into some types they are seven moral values of Loyalty and Trustworthy, three moral values of Respect, eight moral values of love and affection, six moral values of unselfishness and sensitivity, five moral values of kindness and friendliness, and four moral value of justice and mercy. The most dominant moral value of giving is love and affection. In conclusion, movies are one of the literary works that are in great demand by people because they are displayed in the form of motion pictures, which makes them easy to understand and entertain. Students think that learning through film analysis is a fun, engaging, and effective learning method. Besides being entertaining, movies can also provide the audience with information and moral values related to real life. With this information and moral values, it is hoped that the audience will learn and apply them in everyday life to improve their lives.

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1. Introduction

Literature is a work of art presented in written form (Wellek & Warren, 1956). The imagination and experience of the author are the source of a literary work, which is then modified into beautiful art. Literature is an art presented in the form of language to create images or creative ideas that involve the reader's imagination intentionally and creatively

* Corresponding Author
Email: liasri139@gmail.com
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(Goodman, 2001; Sudewa & Gaho, 2024). Over time, literature is not only available in written form; it develops and is available in various forms, such as music, films, stage plays, and others. Many literary works still exist today, such as novels, poetry, poetry, films, music, and so on (see Al-Jarf, 2022; Bozovic et al., 2021; Carolin, 2022; Corrigan, 2019; Degaetano-Ortlieb & Piper, 2019; Demeyer, 2023; Finch, 2019; Ismail, 2023; Leane et al., 2019; Nitami & Hartati, 2022). A movie is a literary work that many people prefer because it is presented in motion pictures; the audience does not need to imagine or visualize the characters, settings, and scenes; it makes the movie easier for the audience to understand the meaning of the story.

A movie is a collection of moving pictures captured with a sound that tells a story, shown in the cinema or other devices (Hornby, 2006). Movies are one of the youngest arts, they come in various structures and forms absorbed from older arts (Elsaesser & Hagener, 2010). Human life is usually one of the inspirations in making stories in literature, which has many genres such as romance, fantasy, horror, science-fiction, biography, comedy, action, thriller, drama, and many more. Besides entertainment, movies also contain moral values related to life. Through those moral values, people can obtain the moral messages that filmmakers want to convey to be used as life lessons.

Moral is a person's good or bad behavior (Hazlitt, 1994). Moral value is a term about what human behaviors are true or false, right or wrong, and good or bad. This is in line with Linda and Eyre (1993) that moral value results from appreciating the process of human values in life. Moral value is inspired by society's behavior, which shows a good attitude and culture. Moral value can be found in the movie, a message from the filmmaker to the audience to be used as a lesson and applied in real life. In addition to providing entertainment, movies can provide the audience with information, motivation, and moral values through the story (see Gébert et al., 2023; Kardana et al., 2022; Kostyukova et al., 2015; Li et al., 2021; Stoeber & Yang, 2016).

Similarly, Linda and Eyre (1993) pointed out that moral value is divided into two types, they are explained as the follows.

1 Value of Being

Value of being is value of human which is implicated their behavior and how they treat others. There are some types of value of being, namely:

a. Honesty is a moral value which is defined as virtuous behavior. Honesty is applied to many aspects such as being honest with others, society, and most importantly is being honest with yourself (Linda & Eyre, 1993). Honesty is not just about speaking the truth, because communication can be done in many ways and speaking is only a part of it (Johnson & Phillips, 2003)

b. Courage

Courage is an action that shows strength to face problems or dangers. Courage can be seen from how someone dares to try good things even though it is difficult, dares to oppose the majority who violates virtuous attitudes, and dares to resist negative influences from others (Linda & Eyre, 1993). Courage is the

attitude to help people and respect the rights of others. Courage also allows one to take bold and positive actions on behalf of others (Lickona, 2012).

c. Peace Ability

Peace Ability is a situation where a person can be patient and deal with problems calmly without emotion. Peace Ability is a moral value that teaches that resolving conflicts with emotions is wrong and does not solve anything.

d. Self-reliance and Potential

Self-reliance and potential is a quality of being aware of our own talents, abilities and development. Having a responsible attitude and do not blame others.

e. Self-discipline and moderation

Self-discipline and moderation are two things that related to each other. Self-discipline is avoiding laziness or lack of activity. Moderation is the attitude of knowing our limits in behavior, whether it's limits in speaking, thinking, and physical abilities.

f. Fidelity and Chastity

Fidelity is one of the characteristics of a person shown through loyalty and continuous self-support, while chastity is protecting oneself from sexual desire before marriage or abstinence from unlawful sexual relations.

2 Value of Giving

Value of giving is value about providing something valuable to others.

a. Loyalty and Trustworthy

Loyalty is an attitude of being ready to support, serve, assist, and be trusted in carrying out the mandate given by a person or an organization.

b. Respect

Respect is a polite attitude and not demeaning others. Respectful behavior can also be seen from the way someone cares deeply about the feelings of others.

c. Love & Affection

Love is not only in a romantic way or falling in love with the opposite sex. Love can be shown to family, friends and most importantly love to yourself.

d. Unselfishness and Sensitivity

Unselfishness is one of the virtues performed by being more concerned about others than ourselves. Sensitivity is a quality of becoming more extra-focused to others and not self-selfish.

e. Kindness and Friendliness

Kindness is a commendable attitude that influenced prosperity, it's an attitude that shows tenderness and care especially to those who are freckles or older, whereas friendliness is cheerful attitude that makes it easy for someone to get along and have many relations.

f. Justice and mercy

Justice is compliance with the law and impartiality, while mercy is a generous attitude, forgiving and not vindictive.

Moral values can be reflected in a movie through the characters. Wellek and Warren (1956) emphasized that characters participate in the action and are expected to be natural in presenting them in a story. Likewise, Nurgiyantoro (2013) said that a character is a person who plays a figure in a fictional story or drama. Based on the statement above, characters play figures in stories and can act naturally to produce stories that seem real.

This study will analyze the moral values reflected by the main characters in “Eternals” movie. Eternals was released in cinema in 2021. It was directed by Chloé Zhao and produced by Marvel Studios. This movie is about immortal aliens called the Eternals, which consist of ten members as the main characters; they are Ajak, Sersi, Ikaris, Gilgamesh, Thena, Kingo, Phastos, Sprite, Druig, and Makkari. The Eternals emerge from hiding after thousands of years to protect Earth from their ancient counterparts, the Deviants.

“Eternals” movie is chosen as the data because it has a meaningful story and stunning cinematography. This movie delivers the message that a superhero movie is not just about good winning over evil, but this movie teaches how to protect what we love and be loyal to what we believe. This movie also contains a lot of moral values that are related to life. Everyone can learn about moral values through literary works such as movies, one of which is Eternals movie. That is why this research is intended to analyze the moral values that are important for guiding one in life.

2. Literature Review

Nowadays, movies are not only seen as a platform for providing entertainment, but also as a medium for learning and teaching, promoting (see Barza & Memari, 2014; Brown, 2024; Ingram et al., 2021; Liao & Cao, 2025) and even as an object of research (see Bandura, 2011; Ceretti, 2015; Chiquet et al., 2023; Gillespie, 2014; Jones et al., 2023; Verdaasdonk, 1991).

Related to this research’s topic, many studies have been conducted previously, such as Marlina (2021) analyzing the Shawshank Redemption Movie. This research aims to find the moral values. Similar to Melati (2019) examine the moral value conveyed by the main character in the First Grader Movie. The differences between previous research and the current research are the kind of movie and the theory used to analyze the data. The current study uses the superhero movie Eternals as the data source and the theory proposed by Linda and Eyre (1993) to analyze the data.

3. Method

This study uses descriptive and qualitative research methods to analyze the data. Qualitative research is research that collects data in the form of words or pictures, not numbers (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992). The method used to collect the data in this study is the observation method, which involves watching the movie to analyze the gestures and

the scene presented that relate to the moral values and reading the movie script to analyze the dialogues. In presenting the data, the researcher used formal and informal methods. The result is presented as a table to show the number of occurrences and explain the data analysis. This study aims to analyze moral values and find the most dominant moral values reflected by the main characters in Eternals Movie, focusing on using the value of giving proposed by Linda and Eyre (1993). The data in this study are obtained from Eternals Movie. This movie was released in cinema in 2021.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 The moral value reflected by the main characters in Eternals Movie

There are six value of giving found in “Eternals” movie: loyalty and trustworthiness, respect, love and affection, unselfishness and sensitivity, kindness and friendliness, and justice and mercy.

Table 1. The Types of Moral Value reflected by the main characters in Eternals Movie.

No	Moral Value of Giving	Occurrence
1	Loyalty and Trustworthy	7
2	Respect	3
3	Love and Affection	8
4	Unselfishness and Sensitivity	6
5	Kindness and Friendliness	5
6	Justice and Mercy	4
	Total	33

Based on Table 1 above, the total number of moral values of giving is 33 data. 7 data that lead to Loyalty and trustworthiness, 3 data found in Respect, 8 data refers to Love and Affection, 6 data included in Unselfishness and Sensitivity, 5 data found in Kindness and Friendliness, and 4 data found in Justice and Mercy. Based on the amount of data above, the data with the highest occurrence is Love and Affection.

1. Loyalty and Trustworthy



Figure 1. Ikaris killed Aja by took her to an area ruled by The Deviants in Alaska (1:39:12-1:41:06)

- Ikaris : “I suspected that you might have changed your mind, I can’t let you betray Arishem”
Ajak : “Why don’t you just kill me yourself?”
Ikaris : “When the others realize something is happening to the Earth, they will come to you, when they find your body they will know that the deviants are back that will keep them busy until the Emergence. I have been loyal to you Ajak, kept your secret for centuries, lied to everyone I cared about but never have I doubted my purpose to serve the celestials”
Ajak : “Oh, Ikaris I’ve let you down the wrong path” (Hugging Ikaris)
Ikaris : “It’s the only path I know” (Pushing Ajak to the cliff, and then she’s killed by The Deviants)

In this scene, Ikaris finds out that Ajak wants to betray the mission that Celestial Arishem has given to the Eternals. Because of his loyalty to Arishem and the mission he gave him, Ikaris wants to stop Ajak’s intentions by killing her through the deviants. This scene shows the moral value of loyalty and trust reflected by Ikaris. He trusts and is loyal to Arishem, and he will not let anyone, including his team members, betray Arishem.

2. Respect



Figure 2. The Eternals were doing discussion in Domo, The Eternals’ space ship (1:34:09-1:34:51)

- Makkari : “Let’s say Druig succeeds in putting Tiamut to sleep what do we do next?” (Speaking in sign language)
Sersi : “We find humans a new home on another planet”
Sprite : “Are we building a big ship too? Take a pair of each animal?”
Phastos : “Well, you know what’s never saved the planet? Your sarcasm!”
Sprite : “Space colonization could take decades!”
Sersi : “It can happen quickly with our help”
Kingo : “What if we accidently end up killing Tiamut? We can be responsible for billions of lives not being created across the universe. Boss, Am I right?” (Asking to Ikaris)
Sprite : “Say something Ikaris. You don’t think we should be doing this”
Ikaris : “Ajak chose Sersi to lead us, Sersi should decide”

The scene above shows the Eternals discussing the plan after putting Tiamut to sleep.

They asked Ikaris, who they think is the most powerful Eternal member, to make the final decision. However, Ikaris refused and let Sersi decide because Ajak, the leader of Eternals, chose Sersi to lead before she died. This scene contains the moral value of Respect reflected by Ikaris. He respects Sersi, the new leader of Eternals when making the final decision.

3. Love and Affection



Figure 3. Ikaris confessed his feelings to Sersi in Babylonian 575 B.C
(28:40-30:37)

- Sersi : “It matches your eyes” (Giving Ikaris a stone)
Ikaris : “You are very kind” (Speaking in Babylonian)
Sersi : “You’re learning their language now?”
Ikaris : “If I want to spend more time with you, I need to get to know them. ‘I am very beautiful’” (He’s speaking in Babylonian. Sersi laughed because Ikaris said the wrong sentence in Babylonian)
Ikaris : “Wait, what did I say?”
Sersi : “You said, ‘I am very beautiful’”
Ikaris : “You, You are very beautiful Sersi. I am yours Sersi” (He held her hand and they kissed). (After that they had sex in the middle of dessert)
Sersi : “I love you Ikaris”
Ikaris : “I love you Sersi”

In this scene, Ikaris and Sersi confess each other’s feelings. This scene shows the moral value of love and affection through spoken language such as ‘I’m yours, Sersi,’ ‘I love you, Ikaris,’ ‘I love you, Sersi,’ and gestures such as kissing and having sex.

4. Unselfishness and Sensitivity



Figure 4. The Eternals were discussing about the truth about their real mission in Gilgamesh's house, Australia (1:03:06-1:03:25)

- Gilgamesh : "I thought we were heroes, turns out we are the bad guys"
Kingo : "We are not the bad guys, okay? We have helped the Celestials expand life across the Universe. That's not what bad guys do. That's what good guys do."
Sersi : "Everytime innocent lives have been sacrificed for the greater good, it turns out to be a mistake. We have to stop the Emergence!"

This scene shows the moral value of unselfishness and sensitivity reflected by Sersi. The Eternals were discussing the truth of their mission, which was helping the emergence of a new Celestial Tiamut whose seed had been planted on earth by keeping the human population on earth sufficient to raise Tiamut. The emergence resulted in the apocalypse on Earth and destroyed everything on Earth, including humans. Sersi felt the mission was selfish and significantly impacted the earth and its contents. She decided to stop the emergence and find another way to emerge the new celestial without exterminating humanity.

5. Kindness and Friendliness



Figure 5. There was an earthquake when Sersi was teaching at a museum in London (09:25-10:00)

- Sersi : “Earthquake” (The children started to be panic)
Sersi : “It’s an earthquake everyone, get down! Under the tables!”
Sersi : “Let me help you. Don’t worry, it’ll pass soon” (She helped one of the student to get down under the table)
Sersi : “It’s alright. Come here. You’re alright, you’re alright” (hugging one of the frightened student)

This scene shows Sersi teaching at a museum in London when there was an earthquake. She tried to protect the students by telling them to take cover under the table and hugging one of the frightened students. In this scene, Sersi reflects the moral value of kindness and friendliness by being kind and friendly with the students during the earthquake.

6. Justice and Mercy



Figure 6. Druig and Thena were talking about Thena’s grudge against the deviants (1:45:30-1:45:49)

- Druig : “You always knew the end was coming. It must be a relief”
Thena : “That deviant is still tracking us”
Druig : “Revenge won’t bring peace for you Thena”
Thena : “But killing it might”

This scene shows Druig and Thena reflecting on the moral values of justice and mercy. Druig reflects on the moral value of mercy by saying that revenge will not bring peace, while Thena reflects on the moral value of justice by saying that she wants to kill the deviant who killed her trusty friend, Gilgamesh. This shows that Thena wants to bring justice to Gilgamesh’s death.

5. Conclusion

The findings show all the types of moral values of giving reflected by the main characters in *Eternals* movie: loyalty and trustworthiness, respect, love and affection, unselfishness and sensitivity, kindness and friendliness, and justice and mercy. The most dominant moral value of giving is Love and Affection because the ten main characters

prioritize the things they love, like people, family, and the planet Earth, and protect those things from anything that would destroy them.

Nowadays, movies are one of the literary works that are in great demand by people because they are displayed in the form of motion pictures, which makes them easy to understand and entertain. Students think that learning through film analysis is a fun, interesting and effective learning method (Yesildag & Bostan, 2023). Besides being entertaining, movies can also provide the audience with information and moral values related to real life. With this information and moral values, it is hoped that the audience will learn and apply them in everyday life to improve their lives.

Conflict of interest

The author(s) declare(s) that there is no conflict of interest.

Authors' contribution

Author made substantial contributions to the conception and design of the study. The authors took responsibility for data analysis, interpretation and discussion of results. The authors read and approved the final manuscript.

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