



Moral Values in J.R.R. Tolkien's *the Lord of the Rings: the Fellowship of the Ring*

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to elaborate the moral values of Frodo Baggins, a hobbits race, one of the inheritors of the ring in J.R.R. Tolkien's *the Lord of the Rings: the Fellowship of the Ring*. Frodo Baggins gets responsibility to keep the ring not go to the outside inheritors. Through exhausting journey, he manages to keep the ring on the right hand. Using a qualitative descriptive method and descriptive and dramatic method as well as close reading theory, the study finds that Frodo Baggins turns out to be a man of morally valued proved by the fact that he is unambitious person, simple person, optimistic person, polite person, careful person, generous person, humorous person, and friendly person. In spite of benefiting to other people within the novel, Frodo Baggins' moral values are worthy of appreciation as he becomes the model of creating a balance life because without a balance life, the world will be chaotic.

Keywords: moral value, unambitious, simple, optimistic, polite

INTRODUCTION

Gary L. Francione (2020), Joel Marks (2021), Jason Hickel, et. al (2019), Batya Friedman, et. al, (2019), Jeffrey T. Young (2024), Jim Baxter (2021), R. Scott

Smith (2014), D. Ralph Ellis (2018), Robert Audi (2023), and Steven C. Heuvel (2018), are people with different expertise that come to the diversity in the understanding of moral value. Francione comes up with the idea that, in matter of term, human is attached to the DNA, whereas, person is attached to morality. Marks' idea refers to the understanding that morality is factual in human insomuch as moral decisions, moral language, as well as moralistic ways of thinking are devoted to human. Hickel comes with the statement that individuals can be independent from whole alignments but not moral ones. Friedman, et. al, proposes that morality controls a life quality that can be seen in society, human as well as other living creatures.

Paraphrasing Adam Smith's, Young elaborates phenomena in the nature that are caused by morality that human is worthy of respect instead of thing the human produces. According to Baxter, from morality perspective, the existence of a psychopath is caused by the fact that he does not view others as being valuable. Smith's judgement about morality merely refers to mankind.

Further, Ellis comes up with the idea that moral psychology can drive individuals to ethics. Audi categorizes main moral doctrines such as injury that people do not do any injury, dishonest that people are not being dishonest, promising that people have to keep their words, justice that people have to be fair to others, beneficence that people have to do good performances to others, reparation that people have to make improvements to their faults to others, thankfulness that people have to be thankful to others' kind-heartedness. Heuvel at. al, state that man's moral values are attached to moral motives, doctrines and expectations with the references of moral self as well as God.

From the understanding of moral values by the experts above, the researcher then understands that moral values are linked to what Francione has termed as persons. However, as the discussion of human can be not only in a real life but also in a fiction, therefore, the researcher refers to the latter through paraphrasing Philip Tew's that novels plays important roles by elaborating as well as sharing in dialectic way with mankind's historic existence, playing their

role in mankind's comprehending of as well as consideration on mankind's lives (Prokrivcak, 2010). Then, the researcher refers to J.R.R. Tolkien's *the Lord of the Rings: the Fellowship of the Ring*. Frodo Baggins, the main character in the novel, has good characterization worthy of a model that Robert Audi has explained above: beneficence. The researcher, then, is interested in raising moral values as the topic. In spite of Frodo Baggins' moral values, the researcher refers to the Islamic teaching that the most admirable person in his belief is that whose deed is the most admirable. Then, how Frodo Baggins' moral values are pictured in this study is the researcher's mainly focus.

Recently, researchers have conducted studies on moral values; the first study falls on Fitri Marini, et. al (2022) conducting analysis on moral values of Edward Cole as well as Carter Chambers in an article *Moral Values in Justin Zackham's Movie Script the Bucket List*. Referring to Bertrens' moral values theory, the study finds that Edward Cole and Carter Chambers possess such moral values as bravery, trustworthiness, persistence, accountability, and humbleness because of which many people are advantageous.

The second study falls on an article *Moral Values in Roald Dahl's Danny, the Champion of the World* by Andrian Nasser, et. al (2022). They, then, focus on Danny's moral values. Referring to theory of respective by Schwartz and Boehnke, the study finds that Danny has such moral values as trustworthiness, accountability, humility, and courage. The last study falls on Rizka Nur Amaliyah Abdullah's *Moral Values in Jerry Spinelli's Stargirl*. Using Robert Audi's theory of moral values, the study finds that the character shows her moral such values as generosity, trustworthiness, and thankfulness.

From the above previous studies, it is clear that the researcher's study has the novelty since none of them uses close reading as theory to analyze the moral values of the character. Then, it is the main reason of the researcher to discuss moral value in spite of the fact that moral values are to balance human's life.

METHOD

Research Approach

The instrument of the study belongs to the researcher himself as the researcher's study is a literary one. Additionally, a qualitative descriptive method is employed here. Hossein Nassaji (2015) in *Qualitative and descriptive research: Data type versus data analysis. Language Teaching Research* explains that a qualitative descriptive method determines the impediment and observes in what way the study happens as well as factors influencing it in spite of the fact that deep observation is worthy of a conduct. Also, this method is a perfect way to conduct the social aspect of study (Rutberg & Bouikidis, 2018). Then the purpose of the method is to describe moral values in J.R.R. Tolkien's *the Lord of the Rings: the Fellowship of the Ring*.

The researcher also refers to descriptive and dramatic methods in conducting the analysis of the novel through the description, discussion as well as the report of the character's speech and actions (Little, 1966). Therefore, by describing, discussing as well as reporting the character's speech and actions, the researcher performs and examines the moral values of Frodo Baggins. Then, close reading is worth using to have the data clearly analyzed. Close reading is the analysis technique in literature zeroing in on the exact details of a passage or text to identify profounder meaning that comes from the reader's comprehension of the passage or text. wholly (Pickering, 2019). Hence, the researcher considers it is sufficient to use close reading as the researcher only zeroes in on the moral values in the novel.

Kind of Research

Because the researcher conducts a study on a literary research, the research then refers to description, speech, and action of the main character's moral values in J.R.R. Tolkien's *the Lord of the Rings: the Fellowship of the Ring*.

Data Collection Technique

The ways of the data collection are as follows: interview, observation, document, and survey the data (Huberman & Miles, 1984). Observation,

document as well as survey of the data are worth using insomuch as the study belongs to the literary one. The former means to conduct the reading of the novel wholly, get the issue, then get the related theory. The latter means to do the classification of the data dealing with the moral values: unambitious person, simple person, optimistic person, polite person, careful person, generous person, humorous person, and friendly person. The last means to do the analysis of the classified data

Data Analysis

The data analysis refers to the research question and the explanation of the research question (Huberman & Miles 1984) that is how unambitious person, simple person, optimistic person, polite person, careful person, generous person, humorous person, and friendly person in J.R.R. Tolkien's *the Lord of the Rings: the Fellowship of the Ring*, are discussed in this study. Then, through close reading theory, the researcher describes, discusses as well as reports the character's conversation and actions related to the moral values aforesaid.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

Moral Values

Through close reading, the researcher finds that the main character, Frodo Baggins possesses moral values such as unambitious person, simple person, optimistic person, polite person, careful person, generous person, humorous person, and friendly person.

Unambitious Person

The researcher regards that Frodo Baggins as not an ambitious person by his attitude to ignore his position as one of the inheritors of the ring. On an occasion when he gets the ring on his hand, he means to throw it in the fire though eventually he cancels throwing it. It is again a moral value of a person who understands that he belongs to the noble family by the ring, however, he is so reluctant to face the truth. "The gold looked very fair and pure, and Frodo thought how rich and beautiful was its colour, how perfect was its roundness. It

was an admirable thing and altogether precious. When he took it out he had intended to fling it from him into the very hottest part of the fire" (Tolkien, 2008:79-80). Being unambitious person in the matter of worldly concerns is regarded as morally valued because property can lead a whole family to be apart one another. Thus, when somebody is not ambitious in his capacity, it means that he holds his big family in unity.

Simple Person

Frodo Baggins is a simple person indicated by the fact that he does not do things extravagantly though he is capable of doing it. It is known when on a party, he prefers treating Bilbo for the sake of Bilbo's health to proceeding being in the party. He gives order to serve more wines, instead. "Frodo did not want to have any more to do with the party. He gave orders for more wine to be served; then he got up and drained his own glass silently to the health of Bilbo, and slipped out of the pavilion" (Tolkien, 2008:41). The researcher understands the simplicity as having capability to do anything extravagantly, however, he does not do it as it is not useful for himself as well as for others. Thus, Frodo Baggins is a man of simplicity in his greatness. Likewise, living simply in a condition of considerable greatness is a sort of having a moral value because it can balance life as nobody is envious of his achievement.

Optimistic Person

Defending his position as the inheritor of the ring is not that easy. He has to face hindrances though with limited physical competence. However, he is so optimistic for the future success proved by the fact that he collects his strength to keep the ring from the evil. "A sudden unreasoning fear of discovery laid hold of Frodo, and he thought of his Ring. He hardly dared to breathe, and yet the desire to get it out of his pocket became so strong that he began slowly to move his hand" (Tolkien, 2008:98). It turns out that though Frodo Baggins is one of the inheritors of the ring, yet, he is only a hobbit who is regarded as having no strength. Still, the feeling of optimistic addresses him so that he can manage to keep the ring. Besides, in Islamic teaching, the believers are ordered to be

optimistic in their future/afterlife unless they belong to the disbelievers. Thus, being optimistic is morally valued.

Polite Person

That Frodo Baggins is a man of politeness has been explained by the author of the novel himself. "He looked indisposed – to see Sackville-Bagginses at any rate; and he stood up, fidgeting with something in his pocket. But he spoke quite politely" (Tolkien, 2008:50). The quotation shows that even though he is sick, he does not show the pain to everyone and still gives a polite attitude in speaking to others. Politeness is a sort of a moral value as the believers of a certain religion is ordered to speak as well as walk politely to and pass by the older. Thus, the researcher through his close reading understands that Frodo Baggins has a moral value that speaks politely to the others though he is unwell.

Careful Person

The researcher also considers carefulness as being attached to moral value. It is told that Frodo Baggins is one of the inheritors of the ring that he has to maintain the ring on his accountability. If not, he is regarded as endangering the other inheritors. Once on a journey with his members, they find a difficult path. However, Frodo Baggins acts as carefully as possible "Frodo reckoned they had eighteen miles to go in a straight line" (Tolkien, 2008:116). By reckoning it means that he knows what to do when the obstacles begin to be difficult to pass, always thinking for the safety of himself and his members. Hence, saving others from the upcoming danger through carefulness is a kind of having a moral value.

Generous Person

Generous heart is kind of moral value possessed by Frodo Baggins. Though he has the responsibility to keep the ring, however, he does not want to control it on his own. He would rather somebody else could keep it. 'I hope so,' said Frodo. 'But I hope that you may find some other better keeper soon' (Tolkien, 2008:81). The quotation shows that Frodo Baggins is not a kind of man that is greedy of anything. He can trust somebody else easily to keep the ring safe. In other words, the researcher dares say that Frodo Baggins is a social man in that

he cares others for the sake of keeping the ring as others also have rights. Yet, he does not claim himself to be the only a good person to keep it.

Humorous Person

To the best understanding of the researcher, humorous person is that who keeps pleasing somebody else. Likewise, it is a sort of a moral value that a person with such a characteristic triggers others to close to him.

‘He won’t hurt you,’ said Frodo, hardly able to keep from laughing, although he was himself startled and rather puzzled. ‘He knows, as well as I do, that you mean no harm. But just you up and answer his questions straight away!’ ‘Well, sir,’ said Sam dithering a little” (Tolkien, 2008:83).

The quotation above is a conversation between Sam, Gandalf, and Frodo with a conclusion from Frodo's humorous attitude, because when Gandalf pretends to threaten Sam, until Sam is frightened, Frodo tries to melt the atmosphere by holding back a smile. It is again a behavior of a person morally valued. Instead of creating tense among friends, he triggers others to decrease the tense in the hope that there are no enemies among friends. ““In the meanwhile, do take care, and don’t let out any hint of where you are going! And see that Sam Gamgee does not talk. If he does, I really shall turn him into a toad”” (Tolkien, 2008:86). Frodo Baggins is a hobbit that has no capability to change something into something else that the mentioning ‘turn into a toad’ is a sort of friendship joke among them.

Friendly Person

The last moral value Frodo Baggins has is that he is friendly. Though Frodo Baggins’ race belongs to hobbits, however, he cares others, too.

“Frodo sat, eating, drinking, and talking with delight; but his mind was chiefly on the words spoken. He knew a little of the elf-speech and listened eagerly. Now and again he spoke to those that served him and thanked them in their own language. They smiled at him and said laughing: ‘Here is a jewel among hobbits!’” (Tolkien, 2008:108).

The quotation above shows that Frodo has a friendly attitude. He likes to gather together with friends or other races outside hobbits. They even admit that Frodo is a pearl of a race of hobbits. It is again confirming that Frodo Baggins is a man

of valuable morality. Not considering races, he befriends others. Such a characteristic happens also in the real world that a former President of Indonesia, the late Abdurrahman Wahid befriends other races, religions and even nationality. He is like Frodo Baggins, a man of valuable morality.

CONCLUSION

From the findings and discussions above, the researcher comes to conclude that Frodo Baggins is a man of morally valued proved by the fact that he meets the requirement of being beneficence to others by being unambitious, simply living, optimistic, polite, careful, kindhearted, humorous, and friendly, all of which make other people comfortable close to him. Besides, the researcher is considerable expectation that this study produces impacts both theoretically and practically. By theoretical impacts the researcher means that other researchers are interested in conducting studies on the same literary work with the diversity in the theory/approach or with the similarity in the theory/approach on different literary work. Accordingly, the literary study develops in significance way. by practical impacts the researcher means that it gives contribution of the study to develop the literary study.

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